

MICE and Local Economic Development in New Zealand: Defining a Role for the Web

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“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Kam Hong Chloe Lau

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the World Wide Web (Web), can contribute to the role that Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) properties play in local economic development (LED). The complex linkages between MICE, ICT and LED, are explored through a literature review, a website audit, in-depth interviews, and a case study from Horowhenua, New Zealand (NZ). The findings reveal that the Web has considerable but as yet largely untapped potential to facilitate linkages between MICE and local economies. Such potential can only be reached through careful planning, and the realisation on the part of managers, developers and planners, that the Web is more than simply a marketing tool, but is also an integral part of attempts to improve internal MICE performance and external links to local development.

GLOSSARY

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| CEG | Community Employment Group |
| CINZ | Convention and Incentive New Zealand |
| Hapu | Sub-tribal Maori group |
| Hyperlink | A reference from some point in one hypertext document to (some point in) another document or another place in the same document. |
| ICCA | International Congress and Convention Association |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technologies |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| Link(s) | Hyperlink(s) in one website to another websites |
| Maori | Indigenous people of NZ |
| MICE | Meetings, Incentives, Conference, Conventions and Exhibitions |
| MICE Properties | Properties that feature venues for MICE activities which include hotels, convention hotels, conference centres, conference hotels convention centres, conference centre, motels, multipurpose exhibition centre etc. |
| NZCA | New Zealand Convention Association |
| NZTRI | New Zealand Tourism Research Institute |
| PCO | Professional Conference Organisers |

| | |
|---------|--|
| Portal | A website that aims to be an entry point to the World-Wide Web, typically offering a search engine and/or links to useful pages, and possibly news or other services. |
| TNZ | Tourism New Zealand |
| TPK | Te Puni Kokiri, a government Funded Agency established specifically to create Maori economic development initiatives |
| Vortal | A vertical portal. The website is a clearinghouse for a variety of websites and resources, from research data to electronic commerce to communication forums. “Vertical” means that all of these functions are related to a specific topic, whether business, professional, or personal (O’Leary, 2001; Peek, 1999). |
| Web/WWW | Worldwide Web |



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

For a decade researchers have highlighted the fact that MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Conventions, and Exhibitions) tourism provides both high delegate spending and high yields, and represents an important and lucrative part of regional or local revenue generation (Braun, 1992). Governments are increasingly aware that MICE venues are an invaluable means of attracting business and economic activity to regions (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997; Dwyer & Mistilis, 1997). MICE properties now form an important component of local economic development strategies and are often supported by significant public spending in the set-up and development phases (Maharaj & Ramballi, 1998; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999).

Conference centres attract invaluable business to cities, towns and regions around the world, and can bring substantial returns to local economies in the form of spending on accommodation, local transportation and other tourist products (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Carlsen, 1999). This thesis focuses on the current and potential role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and particularly the Web, in strengthening linkages between Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) and Local Economic Development (LED). Conference attendees are often 'high-spend' travellers who are the targets of yield driven tourism strategies. The relationship between MICE tourism and LED, and the consequential implications for the study and understanding of the potential contribution of ICT to the local economic development of destination areas, is conceptualised in the model in Figure 1.

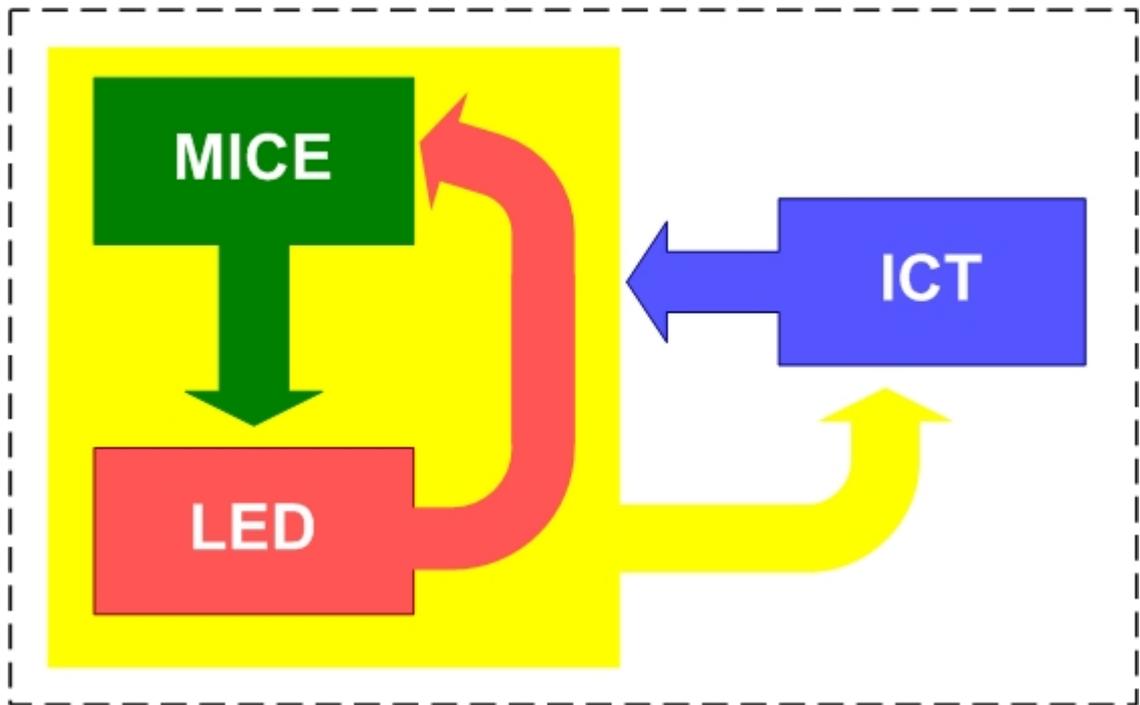


Figure 1 Linkage of Themes

This simple figure refers to a tourism development system and demonstrates the interdependence not only between MICE tourism and the broader economic environment within which it operates, but also the role that ICT may play as an enabler or influencer. Although it is possible to study individual elements of this tourism system- the impacts of MICE tourism, the strategies of local economic development, or the influence of technology- this thesis looks at the interconnection between all three elements. Each element is related to and interacts with the other elements of this dynamic tourism development sequence/system. Conceptually, MICE tourism can be a tool to stimulate LED; furthered LED in consequence may attract more MICE activities; and ICT plays a role in contributing to the process of stimulation while the improved local economic environment in turn influences the development of ICT.

Through a multi-faceted research methodology, this thesis studies the role of ICT both in terms of traditional marketing platforms for MICE and also as a tool to assist in

achieving the broader objectives of economic development that are so often stressed by government and the MICE sector. This research first provides an overview of the current strengths and weaknesses of MICE websites in New Zealand (NZ) using Web audit and interview-based techniques. While considering the attributes of a website's function to contribute to the property's profitability, this analysis also attempts to examine the degree to which the current focus of MICE websites is on building external relationships with local economic structures. A case study of a proposed conference facility is then used to look at the potential for a MICE website to be developed that focuses on achieving the inter-related goals of improved facility profitability and strengthened linkages to the local economy.

In conclusion, this thesis presents a model of the processes and approaches that can be used to create a normative MICE Web strategy that not only meets, and strengthens, enterprise performance, but also more effectively connects MICE properties to surrounding enterprises and destinations. The model incorporates key elements of community informatics, especially web-raising and virtual community building approaches, alongside more traditional web-based marketing and local economic development approaches (Milne & Mason, 2001). Distribution networks of local businesses and other tourism product providers can be fostered through this 'virtual' tourism cooperative networking. An emphasis is placed on the ways in which web-based developments can help the property to link more closely with wishes of the local people.

1.1 DEFINITIONS

Whilst it is convenient to use the term 'MICE,' it hides the fact that the components of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Conventions, and Exhibitions are actually quite

separate activities. Meetings bring people together in one place for the purposes of sharing information and to discuss and solve problems (Ladkin & Spiller, 2001). They can be corporate meetings, seminars, or symposiums and training programmes (Jun & McCleary, 1999). Incentive travel is a management tool for rewarding and motivating salespeople, dealers, distributors, production workers, support staff, and in some cases, customers (Mehta et al., 1991). Ladkin and Spiller (2001) define an incentive as an event often held overseas and specially designed to be a 'perk' or reward for attendees. This kind of company-paid travel is a management tool that uses an exceptional travel experience to motivate and recognise participants for increased levels of performance in support of the organisational goals. A conference is a large event often lasting for several days and involving a social programme (Ladkin & Spiller, 2001; Lawrence & McCabe, 2001). Similarly, a convention is an assembly of people with common objectives, organized for the exchange of ideas, views and information of common interest to the group (McCabe, 2001). Exhibitions, which may also be called shows or trade fairs, are activities designed for targeted shareholders or suppliers of products, equipment and services, to demonstrate and promote their products to a certain market (Carlsen, 1999; Ladkin & Spiller, 2001). The definitions of MICE seem different yet there is one common theme -- events and activities that involve attendees to gather in a place.

Different researchers focus on different combinations of components when researching these related topics. Hiller (1995:377) argues that conventions represent a special kind of tourism "which means large conferences involving a major planning organization and the use of numerous lodging establishments". While Oppermann (1996; 1997) focuses his works on "the convention and meetings industry", Ryan (1999) and Qu et al. (2000) simply use the term 'conferences' to include also 'conventions.' During an incentive

travel tour to reward customers and staff, an exhibition of new products could be included for the staff and clients (Mehta et al., 1991). MICE categories can be inclusive of each other; they may be seen as separate yet converging.

The venues for different MICE activities also reflect this diversity. Convention centres, conference hotels and exhibition halls are built specially for the purpose to hold conventions and exhibitions. Multi-purpose properties such as hotels, motels, lodges, function centres, and resorts can also have the capacity, like any convention centre, for mega conferences, incentive travel and workshops, and smaller meetings. Function halls in stadiums, arenas, show grounds, or even museums are also venues for all types of MICE activities.

The confusion over definition and the fragmented nature of 'makes it especially difficult to understand, and to undertake research that explores the complex relationship between the different aspects of the industry and the impacts associated with it. Although 'MICE is generally perceived as one industry, the debates relating to its definition make it more appropriate to conceptualise the term as a collective abbreviation for these several, separate yet converging activities (Ladkin & Spiller, 2001). Travellers attending these MICE activities, who have a purpose in addition to purely visiting a destination as tourists, are in fact business travellers. These business travellers are connected to different sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry through MICE activities. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship of 'MICE' to the tourism and hospitality industry. In order to avoid confusion and for consistency, the terms 'MICE tourism', 'MICE property', and 'MICE activity' will be used throughout this thesis.

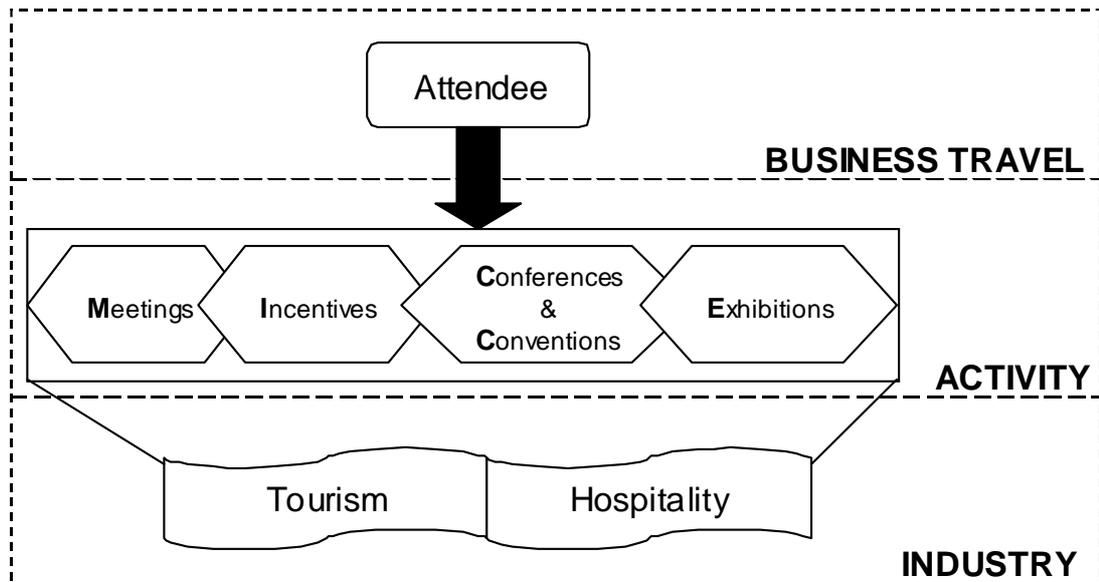


Figure 2 Nature of MICE Tourism

Local economic development (LED) is about local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life improvements for all individuals in the community (The World Bank Group, 2001). The purpose of LED is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation (Urban Development Unit, 2003). LED is thus about communities continually upgrading their investment climates to improve their competitiveness and improve incomes. LED encompasses many disciplines, such as planning, economics, and marketing for the community. A community will need to decide upon the core strategy amongst the following various initiatives of improvement, investment, encouragement and sectoral or area development (Agarwal, 1999; Rogerson, 2002; Urban Development Unit, 2003). (See Table 1.)

| Initiatives | Details |
|--|---|
| <i>Improvement</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving local business investment climate |
| <i>Investment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in hard infrastructure • Investment in site and premises for business • Investment in soft infrastructure • Promoting inward investment |
| <i>Encouragement</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging local business growth • Encouraging local business growth • Encouraging new enterprise |
| <i>Sectoral & Area Development</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector (and business cluster) development • Area regeneration strategies • Targeting certain disadvantaged groups |

Table 1 List of LED Initiatives

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has made a great impact on the business environment. The adoption of ICT is particularly suitable for the tourism and hospitality industry since the industry depends upon the supply and exchange of information throughout the production and distribution chain (Bennett & Radburn, 1991; Sheldon, 1997). According to Poon (1993), the information-intensity of travel and tourism is a key driving force in the rapid diffusion of technology in the industry.

The number of studies on tourism and ICT has significantly increased in the past few years (Nodder et al., 2003). The principal focus of the research on ICT applications in the tourism and hospitality industry is centred on the Web or the Internet (Garkavenko et al., 2003). The application and effectiveness of Internet-based marketing information systems, management information, destination marketing or management systems and decision support systems are other areas of current research.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

MICE properties can act as economic hubs (both virtual and actual) and bring benefits to the surrounding economy through applying ICT. In so doing, they can also strengthen their own individual/internal performance. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge about links between MICE, LED and ICT. To examine these links, this research has the following objectives:

1. To examine and critique the literature on MICE and its interrelations to LED
2. To develop a clearer understanding of the role that ICT plays in the current business structure and economic performance of MICE
3. To develop a multi-faceted research method that can enhance the knowledge of links (both potential and actual) between MICE, ICT & LED
4. To analyse the content of NZ MICE websites from the perspective of both property operations and connections to local community through using in-depth interviews to gain a clearer picture of the perception of key sectoral players of the role ICT plays in MICE properties
5. To develop and present a case study that embodies themes relating to MICE, ICT, and LED
6. To present thoughts on potential development of ICT, MICE, and LED

1.3 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis commences with an extensive critical literature review (Chapter 2). Literature from the fields of MICE tourism and ICT applications is reviewed along with background information on the NZ MICE sector. Despite the significant growth of this

sector and its high-profile role in regional development initiatives, it is shown that relatively few academic studies have looked at the ability of MICE properties to simulate and create economic benefits for surrounding economies. In particular, there has been very limited research about the potential for ICT applications, particularly the Web, to enhance these connections to local economic development processes.

Through a multi-faceted research methodology, this thesis examines the degree to which the Web is currently being used as a tool to enhance the contribution of MICE properties to local economic development in NZ. Chapter 3 provides a critical literature review of relevant research methods, including qualitative research and website evaluation frameworks; as well as community informatics. The chapter also illustrates the seven-step research process adopted to conduct Web-audits, in-depth interviews and a case study in detail. This chapter also explains the data collection procedure, target subjects and sampling methods for the Web audit and in-depth interviews as well as research ethical issues.

An aggregate analysis of findings of the Web audit and in-depth interviews then follows. Chapter 4 presents the intrinsic value of a normative web strategy including key features, content quality and level of distribution. Chapter 5 discusses the extrinsic factors affecting the website strategies. A Web audit first reveals the strengths and weaknesses of 20 existing NZ and 10 international MICE property websites. The question of how a website is connected is investigated. The purpose of the analysis tends not to find out clusters but to benchmark the level of strategic Web presence of each sample audited. The thesis then explores in more detail some websites that have made inroads into developing the potential for MICE properties to work as virtual ‘hubs’ that foster LED.

A review of the best practices from the audited samples begins Chapter 6. A summary of a proposed strategy is presented. To further investigate this potential of the proposed strategy, Chapter 6 introduces the case of Te Kahurangi (TK), a Maori controlled conference and cultural centre proposed for development near Otaki. The ultimate goal of building this MICE property is to bring greater economic benefits to the region via MICE tourism. Since TK is a developing project, it is an excellent example for a case study illustration. The applicability and difficulty of the strategy are discussed through the Web development process. Through discussion of the case study, this thesis proposes an idealised model Web strategy to connect this MICE property, in order enhance competitiveness and reinforce the prosperity of both enterprises and destination.

The concluding chapter synthesises findings from the Web audit, in-depth interviews and case study, to refine the proposed strategy. While the limitations of the research are reviewed, the broader applicability of this model beyond the NZ context is emphasised. A tentative research agenda is then outlined that may enable key stakeholders, including government, planners, industry and local communities, to better understand the true potential for ICT to assist MICE properties in developing, building and sustaining local economic linkages.

The economic importance of MICE has been well recognised within the tourism and hospitality industry. Despite the significant growth of this sector and its high-profile role in regional development initiatives, relatively little research has been completed. Only a small number of research works examining the role of ICT in enabling MICE properties to create economic benefits for surrounding economies have been found. To build upon the role that MICE properties play in LED, one cannot afford to ignore the role of ICT. There is a growing interest in the tourism literature in the ability of the ICT to foster co-operation and networking at local, regional and national levels (Braun, 2002; Nodder et al., 2003). While some commentators have focused on the creation of national information networks and decision support systems (Proll & Retschitzegger, 2000; Wober & Gretzel, 2000), others have focused on the ability of individual businesses and 'virtual communities' of organisations to act as 'magnets' for local economic development through the use of web-based technologies (Milne & Mason, 2001). Thus, an effectively developed Web presence can contribute to the broader economic development of a region or entire destination rather than simply acting as a marketing tool for individual enterprises. The chapter also explores these issues in the NZ context.

2.1 VALUE OF MICE

Over the past 20 years, MICE related travel has been one of the fastest expanding sectors of the global tourism industry (Oppermann, 1998; Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999; MICE Research Unit, 2000). MICE travel constitutes more than 30% of global business

trips and involves 48% of all business travellers (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The number of conventions in the Asia-Pacific region increased by 124% in the period from 1980 to 1996 (Weber, 2000). McCabe (2001) has noted that MICE tourism provides both high delegate spending and high yield, and is perceived as an important and lucrative part of tourism revenue generation. MICE contributed US\$40.2 billion (as tourism and hospitality industry spending) to the United States in 1999, and the UK conference and meetings market was estimated to be worth about £2.2 billion in 1998 (Weber, 2000). Most importantly, each dollar of MICE-related spending initiates a broad set of economic interactions that produces additional spending in other sectors of a region's economy (Braun, 1992). The multiplier effect is always an important subject for researchers in tourism. MICE tourism also contributes indirect economic impacts on the community (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997).

Additionally, MICE tourism also brings other localised benefits. MICE activities can result in associated social and cultural benefits to a destination, enhance the exchange of ideas, foster business connections, provide forums for continuing education and training, and facilitate technology transfer (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). MICE tourism can enhance the location as a tourism destination and be an effective mechanism in "re-imagining a city for both residents and outsiders in a positive and dynamic manner" (Hiller, 1995). At an early stage of MICE tourism, the destination usually benefits from the development's positive impacts such as improved infrastructure and increased employment opportunities.

Given these facts it is not surprising that MICE venues, especially convention centres, form an important component of economic development strategies and are often supported by significant public spending in the set-up and development phases. In Asia

alone, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan have developed world-class MICE facilities with substantial government support (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1997). In Australia, the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre was funded with \$AUD180 million by the Queensland government (Auckland Convention Centre, 2002a).

2.1.1 NZ CONTEXT

The high delegate spending and economic contributions of MICE are as recognised in NZ as they are in other countries. The importance of MICE tourism to NZ is summed up in the following statement by the CEO of the New Zealand Convention Association,

“Conventions and incentives are worth more than \$260 million annually to the New Zealand economy and we are always looking to build on this. Overseas delegates are also amongst the highest spenders of any inbound visitors spending over \$550 a day, with around 20 percent going into the retail sector” (NZCA, 2002).

The average length of attendance for a NZ based conference is three days (Ernst & Young, 2002a). High delegate spending and economic contributions from MICE have led both regional and local governments to prioritise development funding in NZ (Ernst & Young, 2002b; Trotter, 2002). The country’s largest city, Auckland, is currently in the process of developing proposals for a large international convention facility that will be funded by both public and private sector interests (Auckland City Council, 2002). A report by KPMG (2000) recommends that the proposed convention facility be a public-private funding venture and risk partnership which should have a high level of consensus between private stakeholders and the city council and be supported by various destination management organisations (DMO) and industry associations. The creation of more employment and income are the major potential economic impacts

associated with the development (Auckland Convention Centre, 2002b). Another report by Ernst and Young (2001) has also estimated that NZ\$800 million will flow into Auckland over 10 years from the proposed convention centre.

MICE facility development is also seen as a way to attract much needed jobs and income to a number of areas outside urban centres (Howie, 2000; Sheeran, 2001). There are plans for MICE developments in areas outside urban Wellington and Rotorua (Community Employment Group [CEG], 2002; Campbell, 2003). The proposed facility outside Wellington urban area is a “greenfield” conference centre in Horowhenua district (Community Employment Group [CEG], 2002; Campbell, 2003).

2.2 GROWTH POLE

In cases of the development of a MICE infrastructure, the MICE property can also play a role as a growth pole. A growth pole consists of a cluster of expanding industries that are spatially concentrated and set off a chain reaction of minor expansions in the surrounding hinterland (Telfer, 2002b). Tourism developments, including MICE, have been constructed to act as growth poles to help stimulate regional development (Telfer, 2002b). The building of a tourism cluster can be a positive force in improving the diverse creation of economic activities (Telfer, 2002b). Perroux (1988) also outlined development poles in addition to the growth pole theory. Development poles are locations containing propulsive enterprises that generate spread effects through investments (Telfer, 2002a).

MICE tourism can act as a local economic growth pole (Grado et al., 1998). Building a MICE property in the area can be perceived as the initial step for development clusters which create local employment, utilise local products and bring greater economic benefits to the local region. In the case of South Africa, the construction of an International Convention centre was anticipated to serve as a ‘multi-pronged development catalyst’ (Maharaj & Ramballi, 1998:4).

2.3 ICT & TOURISM

Changing technology affects the future trends of tourism and hospitality (Bergsma, 2000; Moutinho, 2000). Applying the growth pole concept to ICT, the website of a MICE property can work as a virtual growth pole that attracts and promotes all other website links. ICT has been identified as a major factor redefining the nature of business within the tourism industry (Poon, 1993; Sheldon, 1997; Yuan et al., 2002). Frew (2000) emphasises that the accelerating and synergistic interaction between information technologies and tourism have caused fundamental changes in the industry and notes the pace of change is likely to increase in the next 20 years. Nozar (2001) also found that meeting planners are increasingly using the Web to find venues for meetings and conferences, and to make requests for proposals and bookings.

The number of studies on tourism and ICT has significantly increased with the development of the Internet in the past few years (Frew, 2000; Nodder et al., 2003). The principal focus of the research on ICT applications in the tourism and hospitality industry has been centred on the World Wide Web or the Internet (Lau et al., 2001; Buhalis & Licata, 2002). The application and effectiveness of Web-based marketing

information systems, management information, destination marketing or management systems and decision support systems are other foci of current research. While some researchers have paid attention only to destination information systems or distribution systems (Caro, 2000; Gretzel et al., 2000; Proll & Retschitzegger, 2000; Wober & Gretzel, 2000), other studies describe website development (Baumann, 1999; Liddle, 2000; Buhalis, 2001). There are also studies which have used figures, such as the number of Web users and the amount of sales generated, as evidence to support the application of Web marketing and reservations systems in the tourism and hospitality industry (Blank, 2000; McCandless, 2000; Wagner, 2000; Watkins, 2000). Indeed, tourism and hotel websites do not only provide information to the consumer or increase sales directly, but also offer marketing opportunities to the industry.

Different researchers have attempted to quantify the potential of ICT to offer competitive advantages (McCann, 2000; Whitford, 2000a, 2000b). Certainly, the tourism and hospitality industry can better utilise ICT by fully understanding the implications for marketing. The Web can be a good channel for “hyper marketing”. The “hyper-marketing” concept for websites includes the “five M’s”: mission, margins, mechanic, marketing, and maintenance (Murphy et al., 1996). Through an exploratory study, Murphy et al. (1996) examined 36 existing hotel-related websites. The researchers elaborated on the Web development context, and stated that “hyper-marketing” required not just the initial creation and steady maintenance of the website but also a willingness to adapt to the evolving environment of e-commerce possibilities.

Web applications are also tools to build relationships with customers (Gilbert et al., 1999). The Web is not only an interactive communication medium. It also represents a

marketing means enabling the development of long-term relationships with hotel customers.

Advertising is another strategy in Web applications for tourism marketing. Gretzel et al. (2000) describe the profound changes in effective strategies with evolving Web development in DMO. In contrast to traditional media, the Web combines and integrates information in terms of representation, collaborations, communications, interactivity, and transactions (Gretzel et al., 2000). The success factors used to measure the marketing achievement of the Web are determined by attractiveness to and engagement of users, retention of users, and users' learning and relating to the Web (Gretzel et al., 2000).

Web applications also allow firms to maximize their surplus by enabling better and easier targeting of smaller consumer segments. Yelkur and Da Costa (2001) described the steps for differential pricing and provided an overview of e-commerce and Web marketing for hotels. The researchers suggested that hoteliers should carry out loyalty programmes after selecting the target market to achieve dynamic pricing. Moreover, the researchers noted that the application of on-line pricing and segmentation strategies could help to maximize profits.

The above studies imply that the Web is now an established channel for traditional marketing media. The potential of the Internet needs to be combined and integrated with traditional media. Web applications in marketing are not replacing the existing channels but are complementing them.

2.3.1 ICT AS A TOOL TO LINK UP THE COMMUNITY

Other than perceiving ICT as a marketing tool, there is a growing interest in the ability of the ICT to foster cooperation and networking at the destination, regional and national levels (Braun, 2002; Nodder et al., 2003). The concepts of “industry magnet” (Wynne et al., 2000), “virtual co-operation” (Palmer & McCole, 2000), and “web-raising” (Milne & Mason, 2001) all emphasise community involvement in Web development, and stress that simple marketing websites can be developed into Web portals or hubs that meet local needs and aspirations and also enhance local economic linkages and performance.

Because customers can make all their travel arrangements through the same site, Web applications can create an “industry magnet” (Wynne et al., 2000). An industry magnet is a single intermediary that has the added advantage of being able to build up a customer database. Through a case study of South Africa, Wynne et al. (2000) examined the roles of travel agent websites as intermediaries. The researchers argued that a single intermediary could undertake all “sorting, accumulation, and allocation” of product transactions, and so minimize distribution costs via a virtual value chain which facilitates the searching process.

Similar to the industry magnet concept, “virtual co-operation” techniques utilize the potential of e-commerce as a medium for developing co-operation between organizations that make up a tourism destination. Through a case study of Greater Belfast, Northern Ireland, Palmer and McCole (2000) asserted that cooperative marketing could be achieved by creating “virtual tourism destinations.” The researchers defined “virtual co-operation” as a network of independent companies, suppliers, hotels,

travel agents and tour operators to share skills, costs and access to one another's markets, without recourse to either a central office or an internal hierarchy. Small businesses, such as individual travel retailers and bed and breakfasts operators, could collaborate with minimal bureaucracy. Moreover, to coincide with this virtual cooperative marketing concept, Palmer and McCole (2000) argued for a need for specificity in the design of websites and the degree of reciprocity inherent in such initiatives.

“Web-raising” is the digital equivalent to a “barn raising” – a community joining together to create a collective asset (Milne & Mason, 2001). Like “industry magnet” and “virtual co-operation”, the aim of web-raising is to build an Internet presence that will advertise the destination, handle enquiries, take bookings, and pursue appropriate market segments. Networking and linkages to different sectors is the key to this concept. The distinctive emphasis here is the intention to build a tourism-centred website based on a high level of local participation.

The three concepts just discussed share the same focus on applying Web technologies as a central marketing channel and LED tool in order to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the entire destination, instead of individual sectors or enterprises. To the degree that the public and private sectors need to enhance their competitiveness and reinforce the prosperity of both enterprises and destinations, decision makers should identify methods that encourage the utilization of the strategic tools introduced by information technology (Main, 2002). Tourism products are diverse, are rarely purchased in isolation, and can be combined in a seemingly endless range of permutations and combinations (O'Connor, 2002). Visitors are able to learn about the product on offer long before they depart for the business trip or holiday (Palmer &

McCole, 2000; Wynne et al., 2000). A positive ‘spin-off’ is that visitor information seeking behaviour brings them back to the individual supplier website and increases the visibility of, and interest in, the supplier (Milne & Mason, 2001).

Network formations may vary from existing cluster consortia to loosely coupled business systems, online networks, or emerging grass-roots economic community development (Braun, 2002). The aim of network formations is to develop a more effective and prosperous business sector through inter-firm cooperation, knowledge, and resource sharing; an effectively developed Web presence can contribute to the broader economic development of a region or entire destination rather than simply act as a marketing tool for individual enterprises. Community involvement in Web development can create a marketing tool that better reflects local needs and aspirations and aids in enhancing local economic linkages (Mason et al., 2003).

While there is plenty of ‘hype’ about what information technologies can do for various elements of the tourism industry, it is still not easy to find comprehensive accounts and reasoned analyses of the key issues associated with the adoption of new information technologies at the community level (Milne & Mason, 2001). Implementing e-commerce may be relatively easy technically but building it into a viable community tourism website is difficult. A “public-private partnerships” concept (Getz et al., 1998) to foster distribution networks can become feasible by applying Web technologies involving the “virtual co-operation” concept, using MICE as the “industry magnet” and conducting “web-raising” to create maximum economic linkages to the community.

Certainly, careful destination planning is necessary because of the significant local impacts made by MICE tourism. This has led to scepticism of the capability of

Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) to plan (Braun & Rungeling, 1992). Furthermore, since “product development without planning is unwise, there exists a sound basis for questioning the roles of DMO” (Getz et al., 1998). This scepticism is credible because CVBs are not planning departments. Rather, they are primarily DMOs typically established at the community level for the purposes of fostering tourism including MICE (Weber, 2001). Although CVBs exist to promote the identity and image of a destination, they lack the mandate and resources to actually plan and manage the destination. Getz et al. (1998) further conclude that such “incomplete tourism systems” could be improved by “public-private partnerships.” Increasingly, tourism regions are managed by destination managers and tourism boards that tend to belong to the public sector and aim to coordinate and regulate the tourism industry at the destination level (Main, 2002). Partnerships with other tourism product providers might also offer the MICE property wider distribution networks and partnerships with complementary products.

2.3.2 NZ CONTEXT

New Zealand is a country that uses information technologies widely. In 2001, 88 percent of NZ private-sector enterprises regularly used a computer. (See Table 2.) Moreover, four-out-of-five businesses used the Internet, and the same proportion used email. The tourism and hospitality industry has an even wider use of ICT. Ninety-two percent of accommodation businesses used the Internet while 97 percent of enterprises in the accommodation industry reported having a website. Statistics also show that the accommodation industry had by far the highest (84 %) percentage of businesses selling products online (Statistics New Zealand, 2002). In 2001, 85 percent of the enterprises use their websites to gather and provide business information, 81 percent supplied

information about their products and services, and 65 percent of websites were for advertising purposes (Statistics New Zealand, 2002).

| | |
|---|-----|
| Businesses regularly using a computer | 88% |
| Businesses using the Internet | 79% |
| Businesses using email | 79% |
| Accommodation businesses using the Internet | 92% |
| Accommodation businesses with websites | 97% |
| Accommodation businesses selling products on-line | 84% |

Table 2 ICT Application of NZ Private-sector Enterprises.

(Source: Statistics New Zealand 2001)

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) has identified ICT adoption as a cornerstone for tourism development in NZ (The Tourism Strategy Group [TSG], 2000). TNZ also cited the World Travel Organisation (WTO) that developing public-private partnerships to run sector website technological solutions is a key technology trend (The Tourism Strategy Group [TSG], 2000). TNZ has also stressed that providing consistent and reliable Web information is an important part of attracting visitors and meeting visitors' expectations (The Tourism Strategy Group [TSG], 2000). TSG therefore recommended that the Tourism Strategy 2010 should focus on establishing technology-enabled communication and information channels within the sector and with visitors.

While there is a growing body of literature dealing with technology uptake by the tourism industry in Europe and North America, there have been relatively few attempts to analyse these themes in NZ (Nodder et al., 2003). Research on ICT in NZ has focused mainly on direct industry impacts (Garkavenko et al., 2003), Regional Tourism Organisations (Doolin et al., 2002), service quality impacts (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001), and community informatics (Milne & Mason, 2001; Mason & Milne, 2002; Mason et

al., 2003). In particular, the relationship between ICT and MICE on LED has not been explored.

2.4 RESEARCH RECOMMENDED

The relatively few academic studies do not reflect the growing importance of MICE tourism because of its significant economic contribution, especially in the NZ setting. Moreover, the MICE sector is still experiencing a lack of research into the use of ICT despite its recommended importance by TNZ. How ICT can enhance MICE tourism presents a neglected area of current research. Careful planning and public-private partnership can enable LED. The public-private partnership concept can be made feasible by applying the “virtual cooperation” idea, using MICE tourism as an “industry magnet” or growth pole and conducting “web-raising” to enhance LED. However, research on the relationship of MICE with these concepts is currently lacking. As a conclusion, a study in NZ targeting the interrelationship of MICE, ICT and LED is recommended.

Through a Web audit, in-depth interviews, and a case study, this thesis adopts a methodological triangulation approach. Triangulation refers to the use of a variety of research approaches in the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings (Babbie, 1989). This term is “derived from the process of triangulation in navigation, in which the correct position of a ship or airplane can be obtained by comparing its position with the position of two known navigational points” (Bailey, 1987). Figure 3 displays the relationship of the research methods adopted in this thesis. The three sets of data from the Web audit, in-depth interviews and a case study could be unambiguously compared and regarded as equivalent in terms of further finalising the model. By utilizing multiple perspectives, the strengths of particular methods are expected to complement the weaknesses of others.

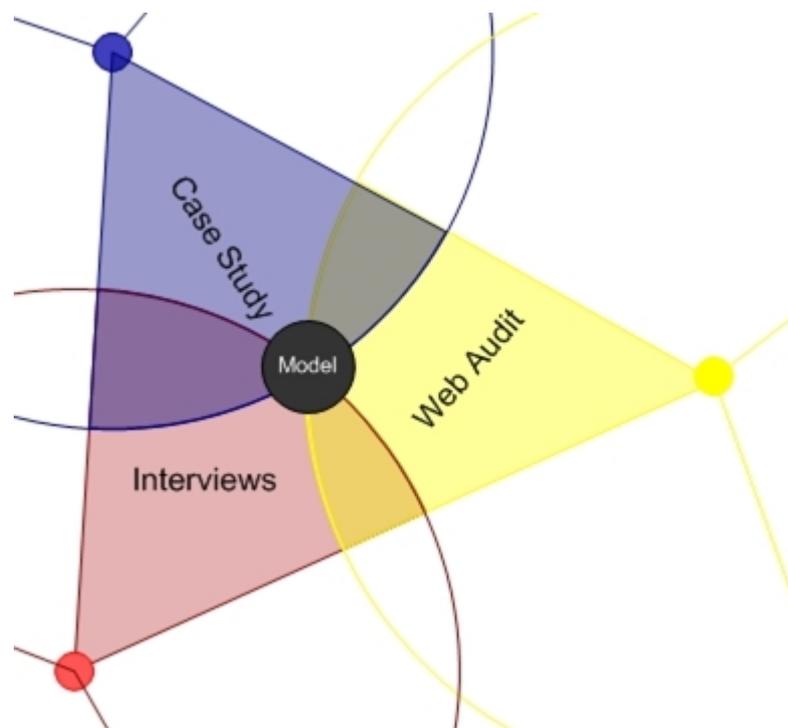


Figure 3 Methodological Triangulation

The first element in this research triangulation is the Web audit. A Web audit was carried out to analyse the content of the websites of different MICE properties. This approach aimed to overview the current content, and measure the quality of content of MICE websites in NZ and international settings. Content analysis was used to objectively identify key features of the websites. Content analysis is a way of asking a fixed set of questions about data in such a way as to produce countable results or quantitative descriptions and represents a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Fennell, 2001).

The second element is in-depth interviews with industry stakeholders. In-depth interviews aim to obtain a qualitative data set through “repeated face to face encounters between the researcher and the informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The existing studies have an over-emphasis on survey based and quantitative research in evaluating websites (Nodder et al., 2003). Milne and Ateljevic (2001) also suggest that qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviewing, enable researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the use of information technologies. In-depth interviews with industry stakeholders were conducted to obtain further information of relevance to the audit.

The third element is the case study. The case study approach allows the researcher to select examples that illustrate a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis (Bailey, 1987). In-depth interviews with local entrepreneurs and community representatives of

Horowhenua are necessary, in addition to interviews with the project development team and the Web developer. Documentary analysis on second-hand statistical data and company documents are also included to understand the background information.

Davidson (2002) identified three types of website evaluation: Web typology, stages of development models and scoring systems. However, the Web audit conducted in this thesis does not fall into any of these categories. This study aims neither to investigate the type and development stages of MICE websites nor to compare existing MICE websites, but to analyse the MICE websites of individual operations and their external relationships to the local community. The framework and model of this research was built from scratch with an inductive approach.

3.1 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There have been several studies conducted on the content of tourism websites but none that deal specifically with MICE. Previous researchers such as Martin (1997) studied website features by summarising a set of common features for travel websites. The current research has focused mainly on content because it was believed that content would be a key factor for effective websites (Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a). Once reservations, news and menus are digitized and moved onto the Web, data become content, making almost any website entrepreneur a content provider (Martin, 1997).

Murphy et al. (1996) also investigated 32 features on the websites of 20 chain hotels. The researchers used a cross-tabulation to evaluate websites of hotel chains based on four non-exclusive elements: “Promotion, Service, Interactivity and Management” and

determined which websites fully utilised the various features with these separate functions. The cross-tabulation's purpose was not to compare websites but to categorise and evaluate the functionality of hotel websites. The study of Murphy et al (1996) was a general analysis of website features. The four non-exclusive categories formed a foundation for website feature categorising. Moreover, Murphy (1996) recommended that the use of sophisticated content analysis techniques to establish baseline data could enable trend analysis for hospitality websites.

Ho (1997) proposed a three-by-four matrix of Purpose-Value Evaluation Framework to evaluate websites from a customer value added perspective and investigated 1,800 sites around the world. Ho's study was on commercial websites in general but part of his research reviewed tourism components. The proposed framework attempted to classify all features based on "promotion of products and services, provision of data and information, and processing of business transactions" (Ho, 1997:2). The study evaluated travel and hotel websites according to their creation of four categories of value: "timely, custom, logistic, and sensational". Although the rating criteria of Ho's framework were subjective, the classification forms a protocol for categorization of features. Though the details of how and what features are being categorised are missing, the classifications of Ho (1997) and Murphy et al. (1996) formed a basic conception of categorising website features.

Rachman and Buchanan (Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a;, 1999b) also identified 59 features in various sectors of tourism websites. Rachman and Buchanan (1999a) adapted Ho's (1997) Purpose-Value Evaluation Framework (Promotion, Provision and Processing) to review tourism websites. However, Rachman and Buchanan's framework modified Ho's four types of value creation slightly into: General, Timely,

Customized and Sensation. In a way, Rachman and Buchanan (1999a) focused more on rating the value of features.

Doolin et al. (2002) evaluated Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) websites based on the eMICA model (Burgess et al., 2001). Similar to the three levels of business processes (Promotion, Provision and Processing) proposed by Ho (1997), the eMICA model emphasises that commercial website development typically begins simply and evolves over time through the addition of increased functionality and complexity as firms gain experience with ICT. Nonetheless, Doolin et al. (2002) emphasised layered stages of development maturity.

These four studies used similar components (Promotion, Provision vs. Service, Processing vs. interactivity, and Management) for evaluation in different formalities (matrix vs. layered stages). The above frameworks or models are all based on immeasurable evaluation criteria in terms of the 'level of sophistication' (Doolin et al., 2002). The details for justification of these frameworks and models are missing. Moreover, each of these frameworks and models focused on the intrinsic attributes and neglected the external relationship of a website.

Intrinsic value is the value which is inherent in an object. The intrinsic value of an object is said to be the value that it has "in itself," or "for its own sake (Zimmerman, 2003). The intrinsic features of a thing are those which it has in and of itself; while its extrinsic features are those which it has only in its relation to something else. Extrinsic applies to what is distinctly outside the thing in question or is not contained in or derived from its essential nature (Zimmerman, 2003). The above research works focused mainly on the intrinsic property of a website but neglected its extrinsic value.

Linking up a MICE website with different sectors can be a powerful strategy to increase this extrinsic value. It can optimise the opportunities that ICT presents. Community informatics is a technological strategy or discipline which links economic and social development efforts at the community level with emerging opportunities in Web application (Gurstein, 2000). Community informatics is an approach that begins with the perspective that access to ICT can provide a set of resources and tools that communities, and individuals living in communities, can use to pursue their goals in such areas as local economic development, cultural affairs, civic activism, community based health and environmental initiatives (Gurstein, 1999).

One of the most common misconceptions is the notion that a business with a Web presence is a business with a Web strategy (Christian, 2000). Companies with Web presences that are not actively engaging in related promotional activities are depriving themselves of valuable new business (Christian, 2000). Having a Web presence is definitely the initial and required step of a Web strategy. A well-planned Web strategy increases the ability of individual businesses and virtual communities of organisations to act as “magnets” for local economic development through the use of web-based technologies (Ghosh, 1998; Milne & Mason, 2001). The reciprocal linking of individual suppliers’ websites or the creation of local portals can create a platform upon which visitors to a destination can build their own itineraries and learn about the product offer long before they depart for the business trip (Palmer & McCole, 2000; Wynne et al., 2000). Figure 3 displays how a MICE website can be linked up with other websites. Websites A, B and C are connected even though they are individual sites among thousands of clusters in the cyber world.

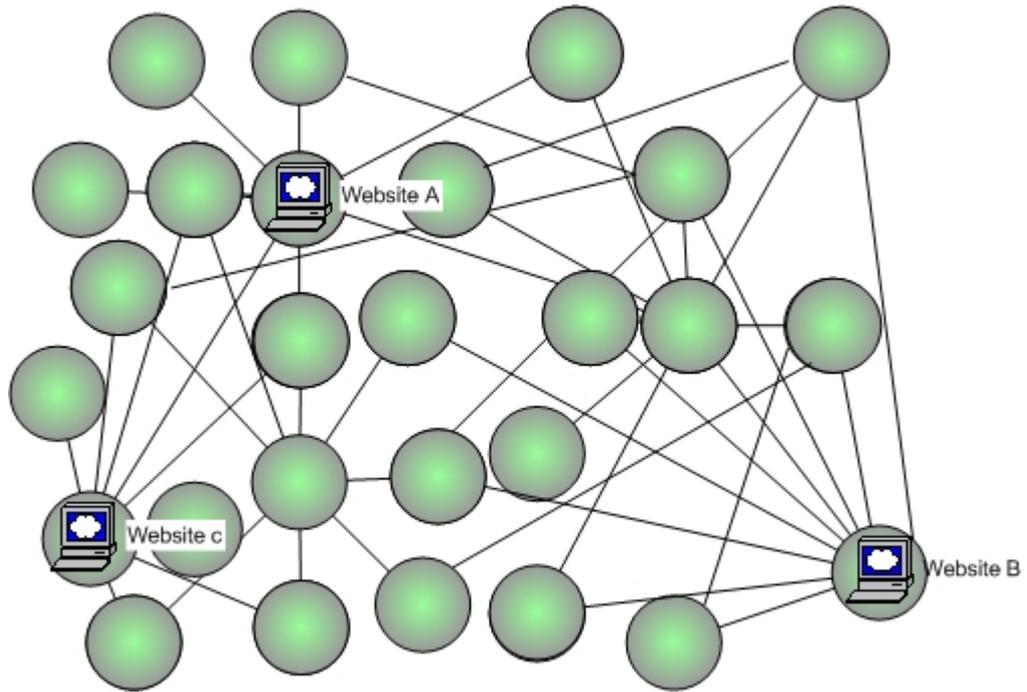


Figure 4 Linking up Different Sectors

3.2 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

It is always difficult to measure the potential of a website. “The Website may have had a powerful role in the purchase decision, but the sale itself did not take place over the Internet” (Tierney, 2000); especially, when the Website does not have a reservation function. Moreover, users to the website often only gather information from a website and call or write to make a reservation (Tierney, 2000). For instance, online bookings contributed only four percent of total income of the NZ tourism industry (Statistics New Zealand, 2002). The potential of a Website may easily be underestimated.

To assess a Web strategy, four main aspects need to be considered: content, overall quality, distribution, and price (Ho, 1997; Martin, 1997; Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a;

Christian, 2000). Out of these four aspects, the Web audit of this research focuses only on content, quality and distribution since this thesis based upon users' perceptions. Users of a MICE website include MICE activity planners, such as Professional Conference Organisers (PCO), travel agents, corporate event managers or any individual meeting planners, as well as attendees of MICE activities.

A website should provide useful content, be informative, accurate, and comprehensive (Martin, 1997; Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a). The quality and accuracy of information is important. The webpage may look flashy, but might not be meeting the needs of on-line customers due to omission of relevant information or having much redundant information (Wei et al., 2001). A user also expects to find up-to-date information; hence the currency of a website is also vital (Martin, 1997; Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a). Hoteliers must also have the resources to handle the information influx generated via the Web, including continuously maintaining, updating and marketing the website (McCue, 1999; Gretzel et al., 2000; Lituchy & Rail, 2000).

A Website is the quickest and most effective way reach out to potential clients (Anckar & Walden, 2001; Leong, 2001). The real challenge is how to optimise distribution. From the distribution perspective, searching and indexing is important. The best way to increase the distribution of the independent website is to list the URL in as many relevant places as possible (Christian, 2000). Search engines create additional channels for the Web. Tierney (2000) conducted an Internet-based evaluation of tourism websites' effectiveness. Findings showed that 61.2% of visitors learned about these tourism websites via investigations on the Internet, using search engines such as Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) and Alta Vista (www.altavista.com). Search engine optimization helps to increase awareness of websites and draw traffic. Another way to gain exposure

to a target market is to engage in the services of a special-interest website or portal. These special-interest websites and portals generally attract highly targeted users providing listed businesses with excellent exposure (Christian, 2000). Moreover, specialist search engines and directories offer highly targeted distribution to particular businesses within the tourism and hospitality sector (Christian, 2000).

As mentioned above, researchers have focused mainly on intrinsic factors, and have usually overlooked the external relationship of a Web strategy. Links to other websites contribute to a website's utility, adding further related and useful information addition to its intrinsic features. Links also contribute to the thoroughness of the website. Amongst different website evaluation frameworks, Doolin et al. (2002) consider websites with links as more mature developed websites in the eMICA model. The questions raised here are the importance of links and how websites can be effectively linked. Figure 4 displays the aspects which this Web analysis has looked at. This research also looks at the relationship of the website to its external economic structure.

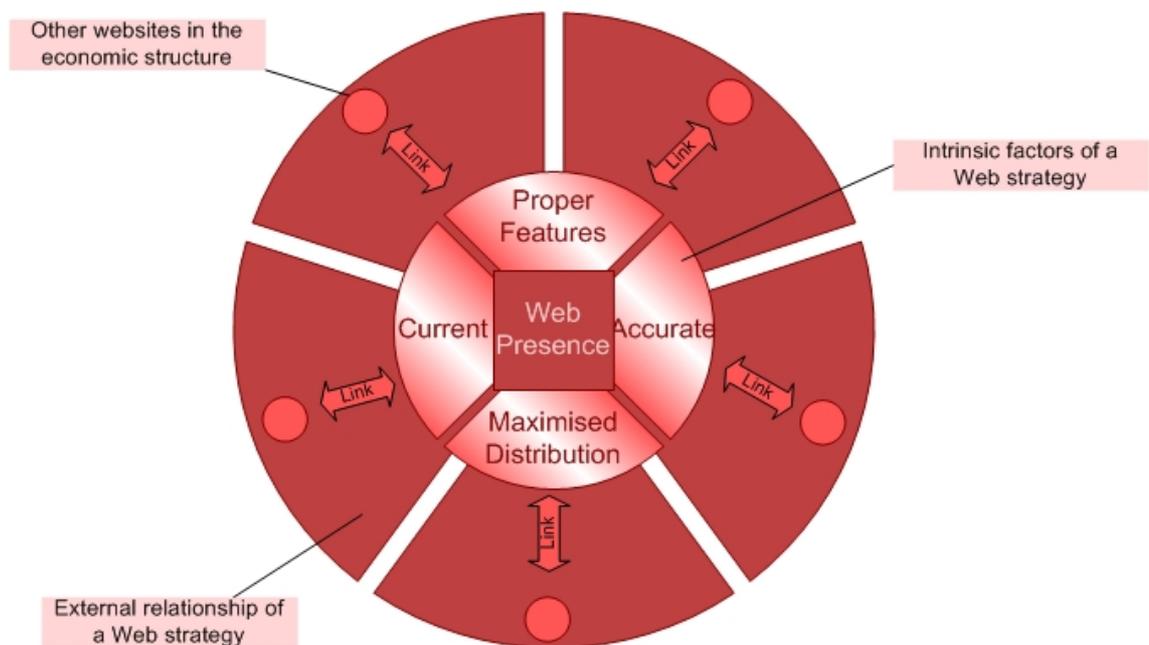


Figure 5 Components of a Web Strategy

3.3 RESEARCH PROCESS

The flow of this research process is demonstrated in Figure 6. The Web audit was carried out and followed up by in-depth interviews. The findings of the Web audit and in-depth interviews were synthesised to understand why certain forms of Web development had occurred and to identify the essential components of an idealised MICE website. A summary of best practices was generated. Afterwards, another Web audit was conducted to find out if there were any examples which met the criteria. A normative Web strategy was proposed. The case study was then carried out to reveal how developments of MICE websites can be able to embrace the concept of improved linkages with local economic settings, and in the process, strengthen individual property performance. The proposed Web strategy was then refined. As a result, a model was concluded after the synthesis of all six steps.

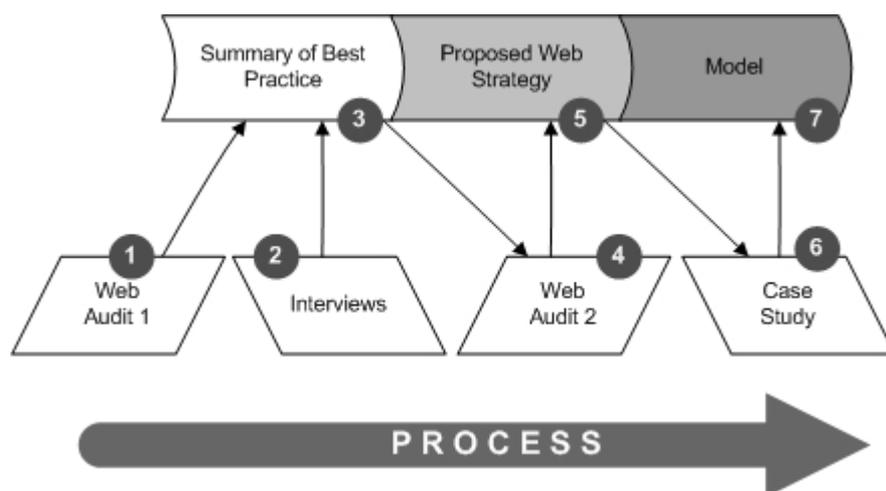


Figure 6 Research Process

3.3.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The first phase Web audit focused mainly on NZ MICE Websites. The content of 20 MICE property websites was audited from November to December 2002, and refined in February 2003. A complete list of features was obtained by content analysis. Features identified were then grouped into categories. The Web audit also examined popular content features as a preliminary study for composing questions for the in-depth interviews.

To enable generalization of the findings and avoid data bias, a representative random sampling (Babbie, 1989) rather than a selective convenience sampling (Bailey, 1987) method was employed. All NZ MICE property websites listed on the Convention and Incentive New Zealand's (CINZ) website (www.conventionsnz.co.nz) were the potential targets for this first stage Web audit. CINZ is the marketing name for the New Zealand Convention Association Incorporation (NZCA), a fully incorporated non-profit society, which commenced its activities in 1984 (CINZ, 2002). This research focused only on NZ MICE properties with websites. A potential set of 143 MICE properties throughout NZ were listed in CINZ. (See Appendix I.) Sorted by property name in alphabetical order, two in every five properties were selected from the CINZ list after excluding duplicate websites from the same property chains such as hotel chains. A sample of 20 websites for the audit was drawn randomly from the 143 MICE property websites. (See Table 3.) These 20 short-listed websites actually represented 58 websites because, in these cases, properties in the same chain were using the same website template.

| MICE Property | Website Last Visited |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Abbey Lodge (Hotel/Motel) | November 19, 2002 |
| 2. Beachcomber Motor Inn | November 19, 2002 |
| 3. Brentwood Hotel | November 19, 2002 |
| 4. Centra Auckland Airport | November 17, 2002 |
| 5. Christchurch Convention Centre | November 15, 2002 |
| 6. Cophorne Queenstown Lakefront | November 17, 2002 |
| 7. Cotsworld Hotel | November 25, 2002 |
| 8. Edgewater Resort | November 25, 2002 |
| 9. Forum North Convention Centre | November 27, 2002 |
| 10. Heritage Queenstown | November 27, 2002 |
| 11. Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland Airport | November 27, 2002 |
| 12. Lake Plaza Rotorua Hotel | November 27, 2002 |
| 13. Napier War Memorial Conference Centre | December 14, 2003 |
| 14. Novotel Tainui Hamilton | November 27, 2002 |
| 15. Overseas Terminal function Centre | November 27, 2002 |
| 16. River Mill | November 27, 2002 |
| 17. Rydges Christchurch | December 15, 2003 |
| 18. Shantytown | November 27, 2002 |
| 19. The Spencer on Byron | December 15, 2002 |
| 20. Wellington Convention Centre | October 26, 2002 |

Table 3 Short-listed NZ MICE Property Websites

The Web analysis then reviewed each website's overall quality based on accuracy, currency and level of distribution. Accuracy was evaluated in terms of whether the features of the website were functioning. The last update date was recorded to evaluate how current the website content was. The currency of the website was also determined by the existence of expired information. The researcher performed searches on various search engines, specialist index and professional associations to assess the websites in terms of distribution.

As part of the audit, a search by the MICE property name was performed on various search engines and indexing directories. Table 4 displays the categories of distribution channel that were tested on each MICE property website. As the most popular NZ

search engines¹, Yahoo (www.yahoo.co.nz) and Google (www.google.co.nz) were selected to test the samples for search engine optimization. National and regional destination websites were included in the search. CINZ and International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) were used to test for professional organisation listing. The Association category included listing at affiliated organization and convention associations.

| Type | | Websites Searched | Date Tested |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Search Engines | | Yahoo | February 26, 2003 |
| | | Google | February 26, 2003 |
| Specialist Index | Destination Sites | Tourism New Zealand | February 27, 2003 |
| | | Corresponding Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) | February 27, 2003 |
| | Professional Organisation | CINZ | February 27, 2003 |
| | | ICCA | February 27, 2003 |
| Association | Affiliation | Corresponding Hotels and Venues | February 28, 2003 |
| | Convention Association | NZCA | February 28, 2003 |

Table 4 Distribution Test

3.3.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The results of the first phase of the Web audit also served as a tool to form the questions for the in-depth interviews. Sixteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted from February 2003 to May 2003 to obtain information of relevance to the Web audit. As a supplement to the empirical content analysis of the Web audit, viewpoints of industry key players were obtained from the interviews.

To find appropriate subjects for the interviews, a purposive sampling method (Bailey, 1987) was used in selecting representatives from the members of CINZ. A snowball sampling (Babbie, 1989) method was also used, with the help of NZCA and

¹ Ranked by the www.high-search-engine-ranking.com in November 2002.

interviewees. A selection of MICE property operators, MICE activity planners, Web developers, industry authority representatives and local representatives were interviewed. (Table 5.) All interviews related to the Web analysis were conducted in the Greater Auckland Region. A representative from NZCA was interviewed for insights from an industry authority.

| Purpose | Groups | Organisation | Representative | # |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|----------|
| Website Analysis | <i>Industry Authority</i> | New Zealand Convention Association | Representative | 1 |
| | <i>MICE Property Operators</i> | Conference Centre | Manager | 1 |
| | | Multi-purpose Facility | Director of Marketing | 1 |
| | | Chain Hotel | Director of Sales – Conference & Events | 1 |
| | | Conference Hotel | General Manager | 1 |
| | | Stadium-owned Function Centre | Functions Manager | 1 |
| | <i>MICE Activity Planners</i> | Conference Management Company | Managing Director/PCO | 1 |
| | | Convention Management Company | Director/PCO | 2 |
| | | Individual PCO | Manager/PCO | 1 |
| | | Event Management Company | Managing Director | 1 |
| | <i>Web Developers</i> | Website Creating and Maintaining Organisations | Directors | 2 |
| | | | Technical Sales Manger | 1 |
| | | | IT Development Manager | 1 |
| | | | Customer Service Manager | 1 |
| | Total | | | |

Table 5 Details of Interview Subjects

Five managers from MICE properties were interviewed to gather suppliers' insights. When selecting interview subjects, an emphasis was placed on MICE properties which had a focus on MICE functions rather than accommodation. Interview subjects were selected from MICE properties of similar scale. Only venues which had MICE capacity of 300 pax or above were included. Only 18 MICE properties in the greater Auckland Region met the above criteria and also had their own websites. (See Appendix II for NZ MICE Properties with Websites & Capacity of 300 pax+.) Only one interview subject was also in the Web audit sample.

The same number of representatives (5) of MICE activity planners were interviewed to gather information on buyers/users' perspectives. These subjects organise MICE activities of 100 delegates or above. Only one subject occasionally organised MICE activities of less than 100. Moreover, five Web-developers who have created MICE websites in NZ were interviewed to gain opinions on technical and Web development issues.

Interview questions were based upon the research objectives and the results of the Web audit. (See Appendix III.) The focus was in particular on the motivations that lie behind website development and some of the difficulties that exist in trying to develop websites that can meet both enterprise performance goals and LED objectives. Interview subjects were also asked to list ten website features which they considered most important from the features identified from the Web audit. The summary of the best practice was generated. The criteria for the content of an idealised website were then established.

3.3.2.1 Ethical Issues

In this research, measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and provisions for informed consent, in order to protect the rights and privacy of all research participants. Interviewees for in-depth interviews were approached by an introductory letter via email and a follow-up phone call after the recommendation from the corresponding authority. Interviews were taped when respondents granted permission. The interview transcripts were administered in a way that the research participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their answers. Identification numbers were

used in the interview transcripts to minimise identifiability of response. The research participants were also guaranteed that their individual identities would not be disclosed in this thesis. Participants of the in-depth interviews were informed by an email letter to explain the nature and general purpose of the research. Signatures in a written consent form from participants in the in-depth interviews were obtained before conducting interviews.

3.3.3 SECOND PHASE WEB AUDIT

The second phase of the audit had the objective of finding out whether there were any examples that could meet the criteria identified from the web analysis and interviews. In addition, a set of international MICE websites was audited to find out features which were neglected in national MICE websites. The aim was to find out if there were any international examples that fit the criteria. Details of a proposed Web strategy were then developed.

A set of international websites was compiled through a similar process using the same sampling method as the NZ websites. All MICE properties linked to the ICCA website (www.icca.nl) were the initial targets. ICCA is one of the most prominent organisations in international meetings with members in more than 76 countries (ICCA, 2002b). A potential set of 238 members' websites was provided by the ICCA list. These 238 MICE properties include "congress, convention, and exhibition centres", as well as "meeting hotels" (ICCA, 2002a). Sorted by property name in alphabetical order, one in every 18 properties was selected from the ICCA list after excluding duplicate websites from the same chains. Ten websites were then short-listed. (See Appendix IV & V for ICCA Congress, Convention and Exhibition Centres and ICCA Meeting Hotels.) Table 6 displays the 10 international website selected.

| International MICE Facilities | Website Last Visited |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Arabellasheraton Grand Hotel, Munich | January 22, 2003 |
| 2. Cairo International Convention & Exhibition Centre | January 22, 2003 |
| 3. Congress Centre Messe Frankfurt | December 16, 2002 |
| 4. Hilton London Metropole | December 16, 2002 |
| 5. International Convention Center Jeju | January 28, 2003 |
| 6. Mediterranean Conference Centre | December 20, 2002 |
| 7. Palais de congres de Montreal | December 20, 2002 |
| 8. Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo | December 23, 2002 |
| 9. Stockholm International Fair | December 20, 2002 |
| 10. The National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham | January 22, 2003 |

Table 6 Short-listed International MICE Property Websites

3.3.4 CASE STUDY

The proposed Web strategy was then applied to the case of the Te Kahurangi project in Horowhenua. Through the application process, this phase of the research attempted to determine the potential of websites and the obstacles and difficulties of Web applications in MICE tourism and promoting LED at the destination. The applicable recommendation was then summarised and further refined. In-depth interviews were conducted with members of the Web development team, the Head Developer of the project and a member of the Tourism Horowhenua Board and Horowhenua/Kapiti Economic Development Board. (See Table 7.)

| Interviews Purpose | Groups | Organisation | Representative | # |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|----------|
| Case Study | Local Representatives | Tourism Horowhenua Board | Member | 1 |
| | | Horowhenua/Kapiti Economic Development Board | Member | 1 |
| | Te Kahurangi | Development Team | Head Developer | 1 |
| | | Web Development Team | NZTRI | 2 |
| Total | | | | 5 |

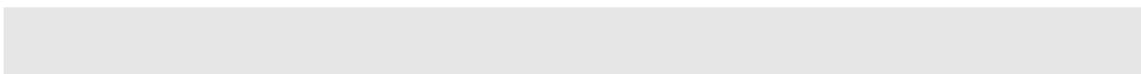
Table 7 Interview Subjects for Case Study

3.3.5 MODEL DEVELOPED

To conclude the findings from the web audit and in-depth interviews as well as the experiences obtained in the case study, an idealised model was developed. Several attributes of an ideal website were identified. In line with handling the technological development, establishing partnerships with other local participants was a vital step for success. Although this study focused upon the situation in NZ, it expected the proposed model to have a broader applicability to areas outside NZ.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Through the adoption of a seven-step approach to triangulation, a thorough understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of NZ and international MICE property websites was obtained. Components of an idealised website were identified and a proposed web strategy was concluded. The multi-faceted research method adopted in this thesis is anticipated to compensate for the methodological inadequacies of previous studies. The following chapters detail the research findings.



CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS – INTRINSIC VALUE

Findings from the interviews show that the Web is no longer perceived as a channel for disseminating information but a key component of the marketing mix. From the in-depth interviews, a MICE property operator noted, “While the website works as an on-line brochure, it can also be ‘mixed and matched’ with various campaigns.” It is not only a channel to sell the MICE property but also an excellent way to increase exposure, especially to the international market. Many interviewees perceived the Web as a powerful yet under-utilised distribution channel. They also agreed that a successful Web strategy is necessary to make use of the Web’s potential.

A successful Web strategy first requires a normative website. Based on the opinions of the interview subjects, a normative MICE website should have the following characteristics:

- Ability to draw traffic
- Ability to present the property as well as the surrounding location
- Ability to provide maximum accessibility, optimize search engines
- Ease of navigation: the flow of information in sequence to the users
- User-friendliness: requires no additional specific software that could alienate users
- Concision, simplicity and clarity: nothing too flashy, avoiding embellishment but providing core facts that users need
- Proactivity: targets a market in terms of branding and position
- Accuracy and currency

There is no doubt that modern MICE properties need websites to compete. During the interviews for this research, a MICE property operator noted, “It is a business necessity, like the fax machine in your office.” Other MICE activity planners also emphasised: “Clients also ask for the venue’s URL so that they can check out the venue.” While promoting the core business, the MICE website also depicts the image of a MICE property as well as the destination. The Web is recognized as an excellent way to link up community and businesses partners (Hudson, 2002; Lau et al., 2003).

To fully utilize the Web in enhancing MICE and LED, having a normative Web strategy is the key. To evaluate a website, a measurable value is needed. Findings showed that there are intrinsic and extrinsic values for a normative Web strategy. These are modelled in Figure 7.

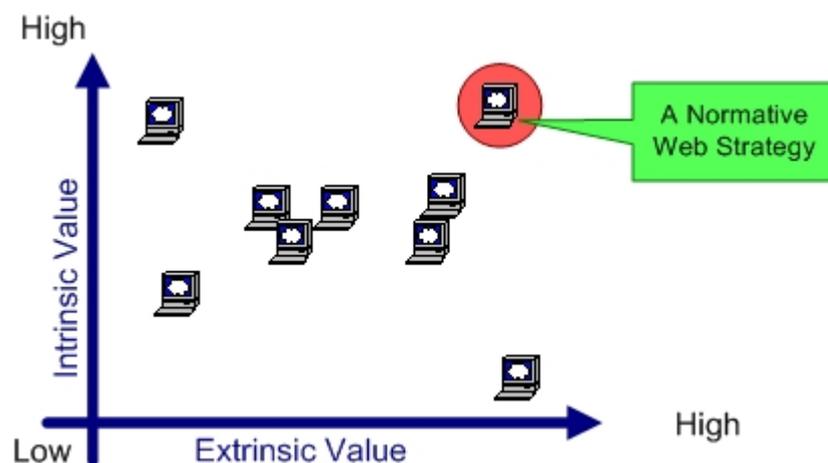


Figure 7 A Normative Web Strategy

This chapter is an aggregate analysis of the Web audit and in-depth interviews which focuses upon the intrinsic value of an idealised MICE website. The intrinsic value of a website discussed in this research can be evaluated based on the website’s content quality and distribution. Content quality includes three attributes: accuracy, currency,

and features. Extrinsic value, on the other hand, can be evaluated based on external relationship to other websites. A focus of strategic website features will be more emphasised in this chapter.

4.1 NZ MICE WEBSITE CONTENT QUALITY

The NZ MICE sector has almost perfect websites in terms of accuracy. Only one website reviewed had minor accuracy problem: a single broken link. (See Appendix VI.) Some users may be put off by not getting immediate access referred by the specialist index. These minor inaccuracies can be prevented and eliminated by frequent audit of the website by in-house staff. Content Management System (CMS) packages are also available for checking links and hyperlinks. One Web developer emphasized that his company had “developed a CMS and provide training to the staff members to manage the website”.

In general, NZ MICE websites contain fresh content; however, only one website clearly stated when it had last been updated. (See Appendix VI.) In one case, a website listed a six-month old event as the latest event. Another example featured a package deal valid three months prior to the audit. On the other hand, one multi-purpose MICE property manager emphasized that his in-house web development team “updates the website whenever necessary and we have changes and updates everyday”. Another manager of a function centre, part of a Stadium complex, noted that “a staff member updates the content on a daily basis”. This latter example not only features the latest news for the day but also “Today’s Special” and “What’s On Today” sections. These are intended to attract conference organizers to revisit the site and look for the latest package deals.

Investment in adding staff to monitor the website may bring a good return. on Maintaining content quality could well encourage conference organisers to revisit the site.

Although this study audited and identified website features, a normative web strategy does not necessarily require the website to have as many features as possible. The highest intrinsic value requires not the highest number of features, but a website with all the relevant and appropriate features. Sixty-two (62) features were identified from the Web audit. Based on the nature of the features identified, they are sorted into the following categories: context, contact, promotion, branding, presentation, supporting functions, planning, and transaction. (Table 8.) Only one site audited had a single, long and continuous page structure. All other websites ranged from having 15 to 100 pages.

| Category | Features |
|----------------------|--|
| Branding | Affiliations, Honour, Logo, Slogan/Motto, Testimonials |
| Contact | Address, Emails, Fax, Hotel Code, Key Staff, Telephone, Toll free |
| Context | About us, Accommodation, Attractions, Catering/F&B, Culture, Expo Guide, Facilities, FAQ's, Floor Plans, History, Introduction Page, Location/Map, Privacy Statement, Rates, Rules & Regulations, Seating plans, Services, Site Map, Term of Use/ Copyright, Travel & Hotel, Venue details (Specification), Visitor Info |
| Planning | Menu, Request Info, Request Proposal, Tour Planning |
| Presentation | Movie Download, Online Movie/Virtual Tour, Online Slides, Photo |
| Promotion | Events, Job Opportunity, Latest News/Media Release, Lucky Draw, Other Program, Packages, Specials, Tickets |
| Supporting Functions | Bookmark, Calculator, File Download, Guest Book, Printing, Search |
| Transaction | Agent Booking, Enquiries, Feedback, Online Tickets, Reservation, Tracking |

Table 8 Features of MICE Websites Identified

4.1.1 FEATURES OF NZ MICE WEBSITES

The features identified in this study are similar to those discussed in the pioneering studies conducted by Ho (1997), Murphy et al. (1996), Rachman and Buchanan (1999a) and Doolin et al. (Doolin et al., 2002). As in those studies, website features identified in this research can be further grouped into three main categories: Provision, Marketing, and Processing. (Figure 8.) *Provision* pertains to the supply of information to gain good will, exposure, credibility, or to expedite communication (Ho, 1997). *Marketing* presents the property to target segments in conformance to branding and position. *Processing* refers to business planning and transactions that are beyond the generation of sales leads by promotion. All features can further be combined into two components: Static and Interactive. Rachman (1999a) defines Static traditional content (like printed words on a magazine) as having a one-way relationship with the user. “Interactive content on the other hand is dynamic, inviting users to participate in the creation of content and derivation of value” (Rachman & Buchanan, 1999a:17).

| STATIC | | | | INTERACTIVE | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Provision | | Marketing | | Processing | | | |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Contacts</i> | <i>Promotion</i> | <i>Branding</i> | <i>Presentations</i> | <i>Supporting Function</i> | <i>Planning</i> | <i>Transaction</i> |

Figure 8 Category Structure of Features

The number of features identified is larger than the previous studies of tourism and hotel websites such as Murphy’s (1996). This may imply a trend toward more sophisticated content. The complex nature of MICE tourism is also a reason for the more extensive content of the websites. A MICE property website may include ‘venue

specification’, ‘event calendar’ and ‘tour’ in addition to the typical elements related to ‘accommodation’, ‘restaurant’ and ‘room services’ of a more general hotel website.

None of the NZ MICE websites audited had all 62 features. (See Appendix VII: Features) Indeed, 50% of websites audited had less than half of the total number of features: 25% websites offered 26-30 features and 30% offered 21-25 features. All NZ MICE websites audited had both static and interactive features and only two websites had no *Processing* feature. (See Appendix VII.)

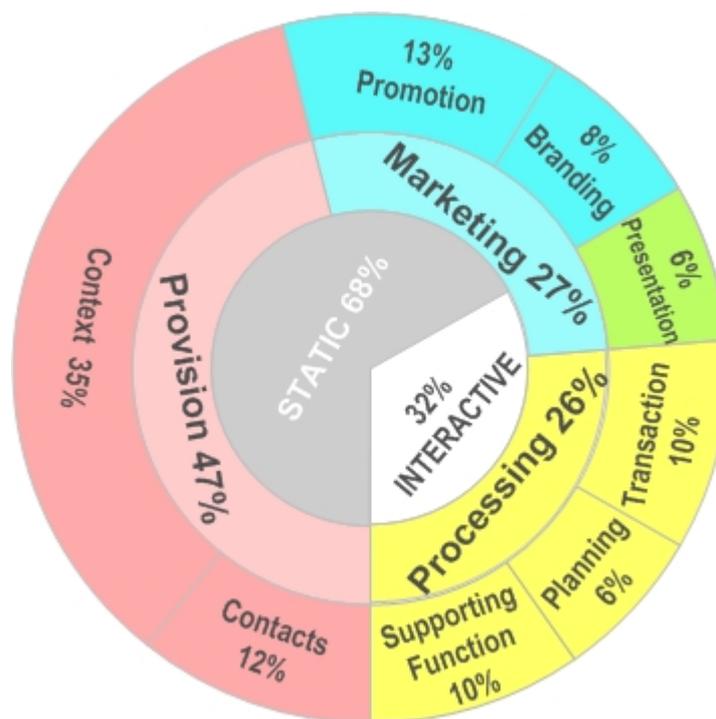


Figure 9 Elements Allocation Reflecting Actual Practice

NZ MICE websites tend to have more static features. (Figure 9.) *Provision* accounts for 47% of all the features while *Marketing* and *Processing* have a share of 27% and 26% representatively. Under the *Provision* category, *Context* features take up a major

part of the websites with 22 features identified. (See Table 9 and Appendix VII.) Popular features include ‘Venue Details’, ‘Intro Page’, ‘About Us’, ‘Catering/F&B’, ‘Location/Map’ and ‘Floor Plans’. (Table 9.) Under the Interactive features, *Planning* and *Presentations* share only 6.5% each for the total features. *Supporting Function* and *Transaction* have a 10% share each on the whole website. Finally, under the *Marketing* category, *Promotion* and *Branding* take up 13% and 8% representatively. NZ MICE websites are still mainly used to provide company information with transactional/e-commerce capabilities being very limited.

| STATIC | | | | INTERACTIVE | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|------------|----|---------------------------|----|--------------|----|---------------------------|----|---------------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------|----|
| Provision | | Marketing | | | | Processing | | | | | | | | | |
| Context | n | Contact | n | Promotion | n | Branding | n | Presentations | n | Supporting Function | n | Planning | n | Transaction | n |
| About us | 12 | Address | 19 | Events | 6 | Affiliations | 9 | Movie Download | 2 | Bookmark | 1 | Menu | 3 | Agent Booking | 3 |
| Accommodation | 11 | Emails | 20 | Job Opportunity | 3 | Honour | 1 | Online Movie/Virtual Tour | 4 | Calculator | 1 | Request Info | 7 | Enquiries | 5 |
| Attractions | 10 | Fax | 19 | Latest News/Media Release | 7 | Logo | 20 | Online Slides | 2 | File Download | 4 | Request proposal | 5 | Feedback | 3 |
| Catering/F&B | 12 | Hotel Code | 2 | Lucky Draw | 2 | Slogan/Motto | 6 | Photo | 20 | Guest Book | 2 | Tour Planning | 1 | On-line Tickets | 3 |
| Culture | 1 | Key Staff | 11 | Other Program | 6 | Testimonials | 1 | | | Printing | 2 | | | Reservation | 12 |
| Expo Guide | 2 | Telephone | 19 | Package | 10 | | | | | Search | 7 | | | Tracking | 4 |
| Facilities | 8 | Toll free | 10 | Specials | 7 | | | | | | | | | | |
| FAQ's | 3 | | | Tickets | 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Floor plans | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| History | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction Page | 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Location/Map | 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Privacy Statement | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rates | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rules & Regulations | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seating plans | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Services | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site Map | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Term of Use/ Copyright | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Travel & Hotel | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Venue details (Specification) | 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visitor Info | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 9 Popularity of Features Identified from Web Audit

4.1.2 PREDOMINANTLY STATIC WEBSITES

The predominantly static nature of NZ MICE websites is in relation to the attitude and practice of the users. (See Figure 9.) From the in-depth interviews, a MICE activity organiser revealed that “usually the purpose of visiting a MICE website is to search for venue information. Because of the number of delegates involved, MICE activity planning requires much information”. Before a MICE activity organiser can reach a decision to process a reservation (an interactive feature) the organiser has to consider various static features such as ‘location’, ‘package’, ‘venue specification’, ‘catering’ and ‘floor plans’. (See also Table 9.) The information required to close the sales deal is also much more than booking a twin-shared hotel room and in particular more time will be spent on clicking the static features such as ‘Venue Details (Specification)’ to check out the details of the banquet rooms. Results from interviews also show that MICE activity planners usually use MICE websites in the “initial stage of searching venues” but do not tend to use on line reservation functions even if they exist. The reasons are “we would like to build a relationship with the MICE property manager” and “we expect negotiation of deals”.

The behaviour of MICE attendees also associates with the static nature of NZ MICE websites. A MICE property operator revealed, “In the case of attending a conference, an attendee may also need to find out accommodation details like any other free and independent traveller (FIT)”. If a MICE attendee is likely to visit the MICE website to find out more information about the upcoming MICE activity, the he or she will also tend to spend more time on static features such as ‘location’, ‘visitor info’, or

‘attractions’. The website’s static elements help in planning any pre- and post-MICE activity trips.

4.1.3 POPULAR AND NEGLECTED FEATURES

A summary of important website features suggested by key players in the industry is provided in Table 10. Most of them are also popular features also identified in the Web audit; for example, ‘Emails’ and ‘Venue Details’. Yet, some of the important features suggested by interviewees are not frequently featured in NZ MICE websites; for example, ‘Rates’ and ‘Events’. Some features are neglected in nearly all MICE websites; for instance, ‘Menu’ and ‘Virtual tour’. (See also Table 9 for all the features found from the Web audit.) None of the examples audited included all of the recommended features.

| STATIC | | | | INTERACTIVE | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Provision | | Marketing | | Processing | | | |
| Context | Contacts | Promotion | Branding | Presentations | Supporting Function | Planning | Transaction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About Us • Accommodation • Catering/ F&B • Facilities • Floor Plans • Location/ Map • Rates • Seating Plans • Venue Details (Specification) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address • Emails • Fax • Telephone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Package | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos • Virtual Tour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File Download | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu • Tour Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservation |

Table 10 Important Features Selected by Interviewees

4.1.3.1 Provision Dominance

Many features under the *Provision category* are found in the Web audit (Table 9) as well as the interviews (Table 10). NZ MICE properties mainly use websites to provide *Context* and *Contacts* information. (See also Appendix VII.) Functioning like the cover of a “virtual” brochure, an ‘Introduction Page’ is the most popular feature (85% of websites). “Venue Details (Specification)” is another popular feature, again found on 85% of NZ MICE websites. In the in-depth interviews, a hotel manager revealed, “One of the functions of the Web is working as an on-line brochure that provides various types of background information about our facility”. As mentioned by a MICE activities organiser, the reason for organisers to visit the website is “to find out key information on capacity, catering, and location available during the venue selection process”. Even though a MICE property can be a convention hotel, its website usually has an emphasis on its venue and tends to provide more coverage of this area. Another MICE activity organiser recorded that “an attendee will focus on how to get to the venue, location and map is therefore a popular feature for providing information about the surrounding area of the venue location”, revealed by.

Although there are only seven features found under the *Contacts* sector, 95% of the MICE properties have five to six features from the seven features provided. The *Contacts* sector is a highly utilized and focused part of the websites. MICE property operators, MICE activities organisers and web developers all ranked Contacts features as important features during the interviews. Web developers interviewed emphasised that “all contact details are a must”. These findings are consistent with the eMICA model (Doolin et al., 2002) which pointed out that even in the early stages of the World Wide Web, a website would include contact details. *Contact* details are the most

essential features amongst 62 features identified. The purpose of providing other *Contacts* information such as telephone and fax is also to provide greater convenience for a user to contact the property. A MICE property operator said, “The user does not need to go to the telephone directory or Yellow Pages to search for a way to contact the property.” Only one MICE website ignored the opportunity to include various ways of contacting the property by telephone, fax, or address. Moreover, as shown in the Web audit, all websites listed ‘email addresses’. (See Table 9.) Most of these email features will be directed to an email interface, such as Outlook Express. It is logical that when a user is visiting the website, it will be fairly convenient to contact the MICE property with emails, a related ICT technology, instantly. International users are also not bound by time difference with the help of emails.

4.1.3.2 Strong Branding & Static Visual but Weak Promotional Concept

In contrast to the interview findings, the Web audit showed Web/Internet promotion is weak with 20% of the websites neglecting to include *any* features in the *Promotion* sector. These websites do not utilise the promotional function. (See also Appendix VII.) Half the websites audited include ‘Package’ as one of the features. Although price may not be the major factor that leads to selecting the venue due to the large number of delegates involved, the marketing and promotional function should not be neglected.

The focus of the venue, ‘Events’, is another neglected feature with only 33% of websites featuring it. (See Table 9.) A MICE activity organiser believed that “it is important to have an event calendar to list the important activities which have been

hosted and scheduled.” MICE organisers can then have a clear idea of whether the venue will be available during the venue selection process. Moreover, when scheduling an exhibition or a show fair, an organiser “can avoid having similar types of activity in the same venue on similar dates”. An attendee can also browse through the event calendar and find out what events are of interest.

Every MICE property audited incorporates the logo into its website. Interview results show every MICE operator understands and applies the branding concept. “The ‘Logo’ is an identity that can remind users of its affiliations and related businesses”. A web developer noted that “a website is also an item of the corporate materials. Therefore, it is necessary to show the identity of the company”.

None of the websites missed the opportunity to use photos to present the property. Most of the websites not only featured photos but also in a variety of forms of photo presentation: live camera, separate windows for individual photos, photo gallery, photos in every page, 360 degree photos, and enlargement with very high resolution. “Photographs are the best way to depict the facility”, noted a Web developer during the interview. No text description can create the visual impact that a photo can provide. Although all MICE property managers and web developers interviewed believed that “the features of ‘Virtual tour’ also provide users an opportunity to inspect the venue before a site visit”, ‘Virtual tour’ is another neglected yet important feature. Only 20% of websites featured “Online Movie/Virtual Tour”. Interestingly, all the MICE activity organisers revealed that they would still prefer to have a site (physical venue) visit instead of a virtual tour.

4.1.3.3 Weak Processing Function

Processing transactions is the predominant function among the interactive features identified, of which on-line '*Reservation*' is the most popular feature. 45% of websites audited had no *Supporting Function* features. A Web developer revealed in interview that "In terms of information provided, having a search function in a large website of 100 pages is helpful for users to find out the specific information more efficiently". All large sites audited had such a 'Search' feature. However, "some other supporting features such as 'Printing' and 'Calculator' seem redundant", according to a MICE activity organiser.

There are also two overlooked yet critical features. Only three websites featured a 'Menu'. A MICE property may not want to provide too much information due to competition. A convention hotel may have too many menus available to be featured. However, one respondent noted, providing "a sample menu can actually show the target market about the price range and types of cuisine." Only one example audited featured 'tour planning', through which an organiser can plan for a related site tour, or individual trips for an incentive programmes. Individual attendees can also plan pre- and post-activity trips. The assistance of these features can promote easy navigation and make information more accessible.

Half of the websites had no *Planning* feature while only 20% had no *Transaction* features. (See also Table 9 and Appendix VII.) Among the *Planning* sector, 'Request Info' and 'Request Proposals' are popular features. Most websites audited asked users to submit a similar form to the corresponding department, usually the sales team, for

email correspondence. 'Request Info' and 'Request Proposals' can be combined in a form under 'Enquiries'.

Unlike other commercial websites, on-line processing features are not mainstream among MICE websites. Although 60% of websites offer on-line reservation, only four have an actual functioning reservation system. Indeed, many on-line reservation systems may not even have the ability to confirm instant availability or process payment. Usually, users have to complete a form which generates an email reply. Even with a functioning reservation system, "the information required in the reservation form is in much more detail than for any FIT to book a hotel room", a MICE property operator emphasised. For many of these interviewed, on-line processing was simply not a feasible option.

One example requires the user to complete a four-page reservation form. (Figure 10.) This is again "due to the number of delegates and programme of the event involved" according to all MICE property managers and MICE activity organisers. "However, extremely complicated reservation forms may turn clients off", one web developer stated. Though all MICE organisers interviewed confessed that they had no experience of using, nor intention to use the reservation features, MICE property managers and Web developers still believe reservation features are necessary. A hotel manager revealed, "It is another way to collect data for a customer relationship service or programme". The processing function seems to have become another element in the marketing campaign.

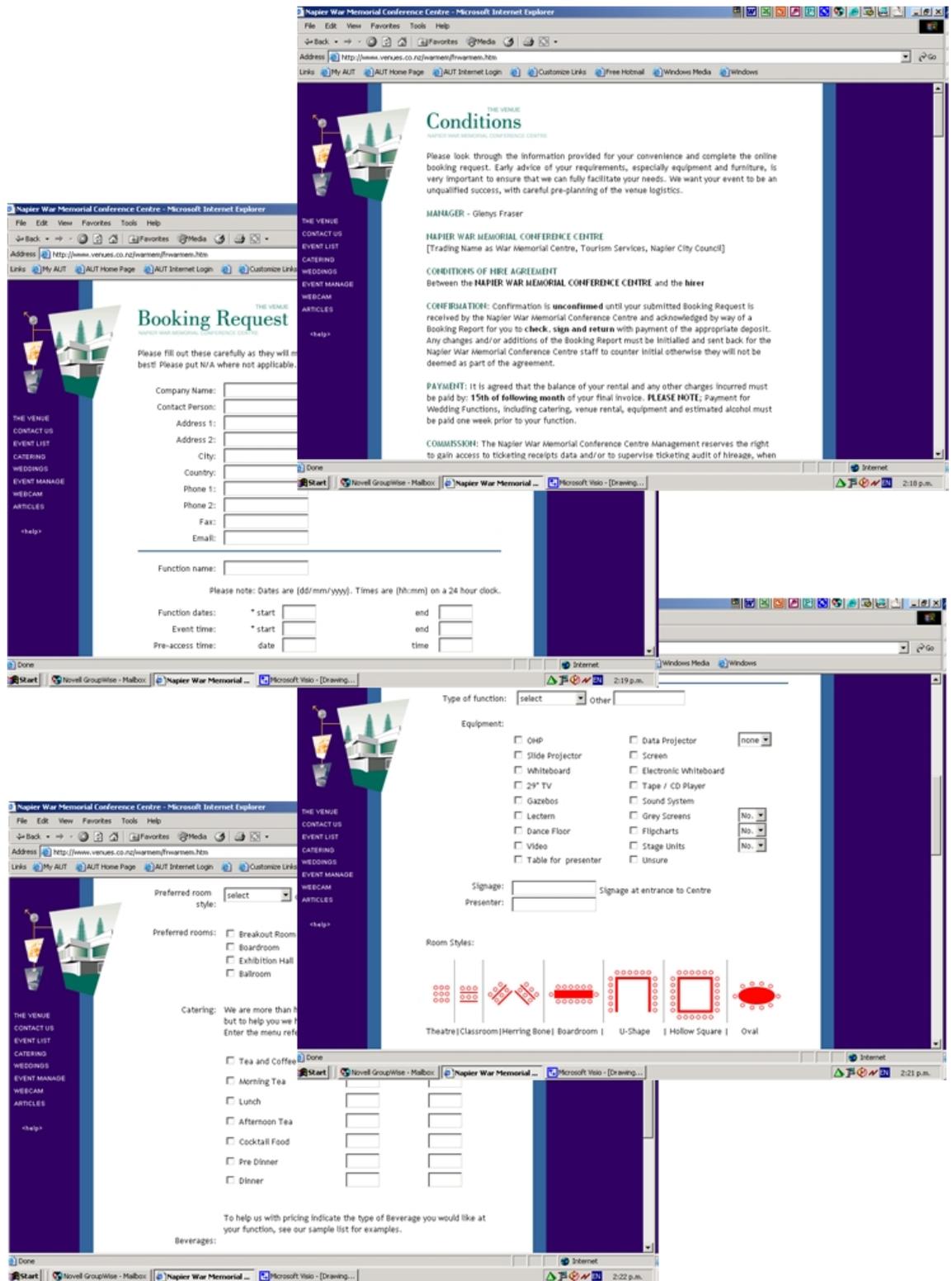


Figure 10 Example of a Complicated Reservation Page

4.2 MAXIMISED DISTRIBUTION

In general, NZ MICE websites attempt to achieve optimised distribution. Some websites listed their URL in every index and directory possible. On the other hand, there is still room for the others to increase ways to reach out to potential clients. Ninety five percent of websites are ranked within the top three position of the search engine result. Only one site is not found in any search engine. (See Appendix VIII.) If users do not have the exact URL, it will be almost impossible for them to locate this website.

Nearly one-third of websites are not listed in any destination websites. There were six websites which were not listed on the NZ national tourism board website (www.purenz.com) or any regional destination website, such as Tourism Auckland (www.aucklandnz.com). (See also Appendix VIII.) Table 11 also displays some examples for the destination websites found in the Web audit. Since the entire website sample is based on the listing in CINZ, they all can be found in this professional portal. Furthermore, one NZ MICE website is also listed in the ICCA index. NZ MICE websites make very good use of association indexing. (Table 11.) All chain hotels and venues can be found in other affiliated websites with related businesses. All websites are also listed in NZCA, the industry organization for NZ.

| Specialist Index | | Association | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Destination Site | Professional | Affiliation | Convention Association |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.purenz.com • www.cityofdunedin.com • www.rotoruanz.com • www.west-coast.co.nz • www.wellingtonnz.com • www.hawkesbaytourism.co.nz | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.conventionsnz.co.nz • www.icca.nl | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accor Group • Copthorne, Millennium, Quality • Heritage, City Life • Grand Chancellor • Castle Resort & Hotel • TSL Venues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZCA |

Table 11 Examples of Specialist and Association Indexing

Results from the interviews revealed that Google and Yahoo are the search engines that MICE activities organizers preferred. Seven websites have listings on all search engines and indexing directories. (See Appendix VIII.) These websites attempt to list the URL in as many as relevant websites or portals as possible to increase exposure to their target markets. One organizer said she used www.venues.co.nz to search for venue information in addition to CINZ’s website and destination sites.

4.3 INTRINSIC VALUE MATRIX

Based on the model in Figure 7, intrinsic value is measured by the website content and how the website is distributed. The accuracy and currency of the content, as well as the inclusiveness of the key features suggested by the interviewees (key features) were considered. (See also Table 10) In terms of distribution, websites were ranked based on specialist listing, association indexing and search engine optimisation. The results of the Web analysis were presented in a matrix of intrinsic value. (Figure 11.) With the horizontal axis representing levels of content quality and vertical axis indicating the levels of distribution, this matrix benchmarks NZ MICE websites.

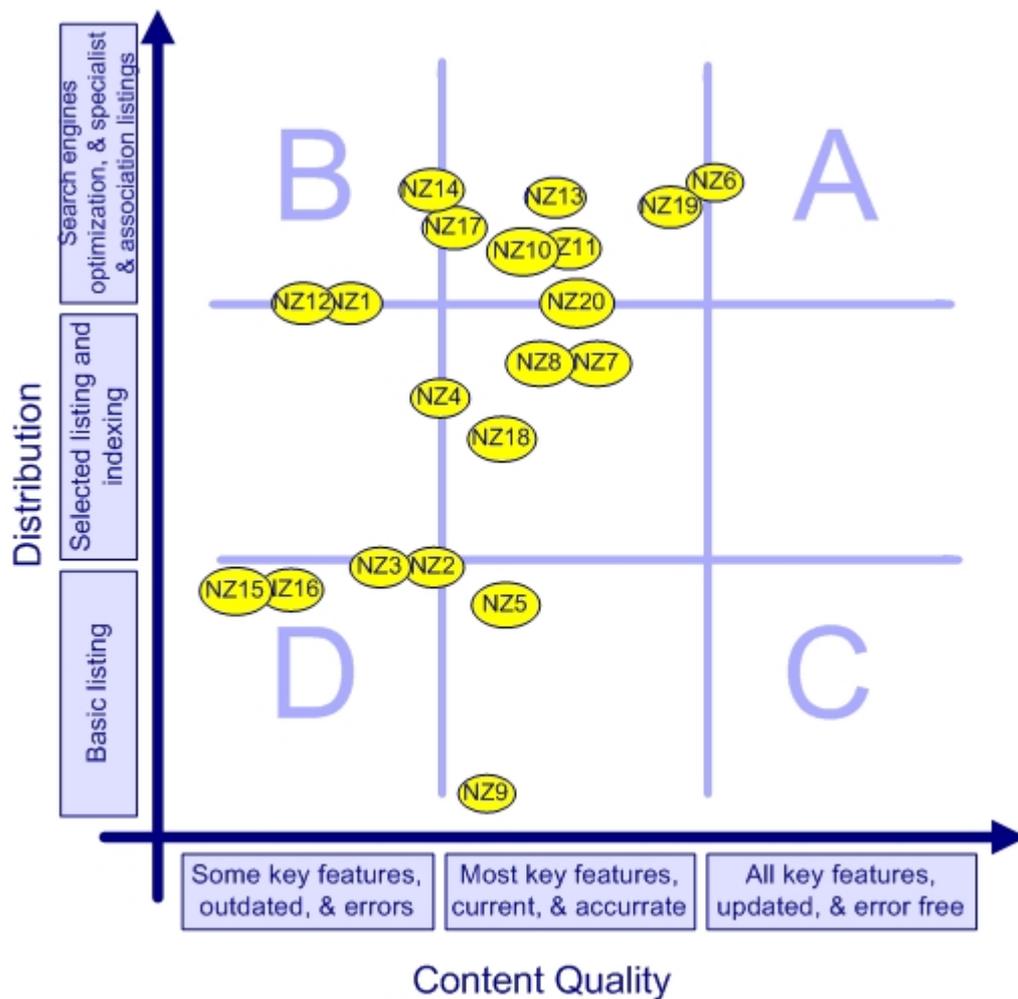


Figure 11 Matrix of Intrinsic Value for NZ Examples

The best quality website content progresses from left to right on the X-axis. Websites with poor quality content tend to include only some of the key features while the contents are also outdated and prone to error. Websites in the next level exhibit improved quality. Websites in this level tend to include most of the key features while the contents are also current and accurate. The last level represents websites with the highest quality. All key features are included in these websites. They are usually updated daily and are free of errors. An excellent website will be located in the far right of this matrix.

Websites with improved distribution progress from the bottom to top on the Y-axis. Websites with poor distribution tend to have only some listings in search engines, specialist indexes, or association directories. Websites with improved distribution are in the next level and are listed in most of the search engines, and related specialist indexes and association directories. The best websites optimised distribution featuring listing in the popular search engines, destinations websites and professional organisation indexes, and affiliation and conventions association listings. Thus, an excellent website will be located in the far top of this matrix.

The websites with highest intrinsic value are scattering around Sector A while the lowest cases are lying in Sector D. Sector B features websites that emphasise distribution heavily but tend to neglect the importance of content. Similarly, websites in sector C may have a high quality of contents. However, since the distributions of sector C's websites are poor, the potential of the Web is underutilised. None of the NZ examples fall in Sector C.

NZ MICE websites are highly optimised in distribution but only moderate in content quality. Most of the websites are scattered on the best level of distribution. None of the NZ MICE example falls into sector A, i.e. meeting the criteria of having all the essential features. (See also Appendix VIII.) Nonetheless, 30% of the samples are scattered around sector D. (See Figure 11.) These findings indicate that there is still lots of room for NZ MICE operators to improve the quality of their Web content.

Among all samples from the Web audit, NZ6, Copthorne Queenstown Lakefront (Copthorne) is the website which meets the criteria most effectively, although it still neglected to feature 'Seating Plan' and 'Events'. These two features are regarded as

important by MICE activity organizers (based on the interview). In terms of quality, the content of Copthorne’s site is also accurate and current. For example, because of its target market, Copthorne also has a Japanese language website. Distribution is also optimised. Its website can be located from both search engines tested, TNZ’s website, CINZ’s website, affiliated hotels such as Millennium and Novotel, and the NZCA listing.

4.3.1 INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

Putting the Web audit results for international MICE websites into the same matrix of intrinsic value, a slightly different phenomenon was found. Interestingly, none of the international examples falls into either sector A or D. Figure 12 demonstrates the intrinsic value matrix for the international examples. All examples are scattered in the middle of the matrix.

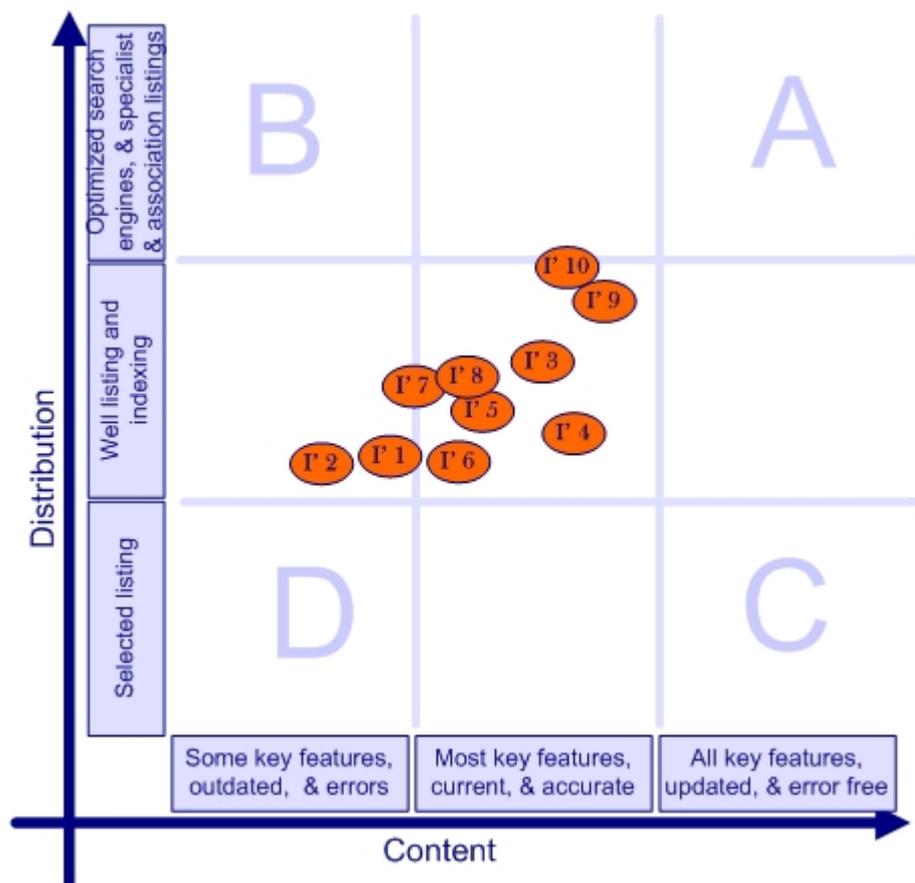
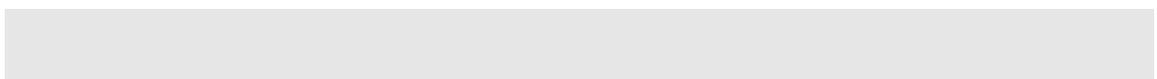


Figure 12 Matrix of Intrinsic Value for International Examples

I9, Stockholm International Fair (SIF) is the best international example. However, SIF is still missing four of the key features including 'Tour Planning', 'Accommodation', 'Facilities' and 'Reservation'. (See also Appendix IX.) SIF also has a high value for distribution. Its website can be located from both search engines tested, the city of Stockholm information website, ICCA's website and Congress Stockholm, the site of specialist MICE promotion organisation. (See Appendix VII.) SIF has no appearance in any other company's links page. The property may not have any affiliated business.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Intrinsically, a normative Web strategy requires a website with excellent content quality. NZ MICE websites are current and accurate. The complex nature of MICE tourism contributes to the predominant static nature of the website features. NZ MICE websites, therefore, work mainly as a tool to provide product information, and support very limited ecommerce activity. NZ MICE websites also have maximised distribution. Examples reviewed showed there are cases that meet the criteria quite closely. The question raised next is how a website with high intrinsic value can be linked effectively to establish a normative Web strategy.



As discussed in the previous chapter, a normative Web strategy requires more than just a website with excellent content quality. Control of extrinsic factors is also important. Extrinsic attributes in the normative Web strategy include connection and management of external relationships and links. External links are references made from one website to other websites. Better planning of the extrinsic attributes contributes to the higher extrinsic value of a website.

In addition to intrinsic factors, the Web audit also focused on the external relationships and links that are featured on the sample websites. From the data collected in the audit, an overview of what NZ MICE websites are linked to, and how they are linked to, can also be generated. This session is again an aggregate analysis of the Web audit and the in-depth interviews.

5.1 LINKS IDENTIFIED

The importance of links was discussed in Chapter 3. Links not only contribute to the flow of the content and make the website a more convenient tool for searching information. They also make the website a hub to connect to other websites. Although this study audited and listed the website links, a normative web strategy does not necessarily require the website to have as many links as possible. High extrinsic value does not require a large number of links. It requires a website with all the relevant and appropriate links.

5.1.1 CATEGORIES OF LINKS

Forty-seven external links were identified during the Web audit. Based on the nature of the links, they were sorted into the following eight categories: associations, DMO, local attractions, partners, shareware, societies, suppliers, and tools. (See Table 12.) The above eight categories can be further organised into three major groups: business, community, and supporting. (Figure 13.)

| Category | Links |
|-------------------|---|
| Associations | AA, EVANZ, CINZ, MANZ, NZSO, Festival Singers, Olympic NZ, Qualmark, Travel Agency, Travel Guide |
| DMO | Local Destination, National Destination, Regional Destination |
| Local Attractions | Activities, Attractions, Leisure, Lifestyle, Museum, Park, Resort, Restaurant, & Sport |
| Partners | Airlines, Affiliated Hotels/Venues, Cabs, Credit Cards, Helilink, Related Businesses of the Group, Rental Car & Web Developer |
| Shareware | Acrobat Reader, Macromedia, Media Player, QuickTime |
| Societies | Children Charity, Government (City, County, Region), Local Marketing Organisation & Working and Living Info |
| Suppliers | Caterer, Events, NZ Accommodation, Sky TV, Ticketek/Box Office, Wedding Planners |
| Tool | Wise's Map |

Table 12 Links Categories

| LINKS | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| Business | | | Community | | | Supporting | |
| <i>Association</i> | <i>Partners</i> | <i>Suppliers</i> | <i>DMO</i> | <i>Local Attractions</i> | <i>Society</i> | <i>Shareware</i> | <i>Tool</i> |

Figure 13 Links Categorizing Structure

Obviously, business links are links to sites having a business relationship to the MICE property. Having business links not only provides more comprehensive information but also affects strategic alliance formation. Typical business links include *Associations*, *Partners* and *Suppliers*. Providing these links enables the provision of a website where a

user can find all information needed to organise a meeting. Examples of *Suppliers* links include 'Caterer', and 'Wedding Planner'. The most popular business links are with *Partners*, especially 'Affiliated Hotels and Venues' and 'Related Businesses of the Group'. Examples of business partners also include 'Airlines', 'Rental Cars', and 'Credit Cards'.

Community links are links that have a relationship to the people and geographical area of where the MICE property is located. Community links show the identity and signature items of a destination. The links create a Web presence that can attract attendees and organisers. Typical community links are destination websites, government websites, local attractions, local activities and events, museums and parks, the natural and cultural environment. These can also be possible business links from the local community.

Supporting links are featured to enhance the navigation experience of the users. Typical examples are multimedia supporting shareware for viewing photos and videos, e. g. QuickTime and Windows Media Player, or for assisting download of documents, e.g. Adobe Acrobat Reader. Because the purpose of the research is not to discover the website's usability, this thesis focus on the business and community links

Only two of the websites audited had no links to other websites. Only four had all three major groups of links. Ninety percent of websites audited had some external business links and half had links to the broader community. (See Appendix VI.) Findings also show that websites with more features also provide more links.

5.1.2 POPULAR VS NEGLECTED LINKS

Among all types of links found in the audit, DMO websites were the most popular links. As with interactive features, these links fill information gaps for the user. In one interview, a Web developer noted, “Websites with links can offer all necessary information while preventing information double-up and overload”. Having links to DMO or official destination websites can save pages of text that would be required to provide details of the charm, style, and uniqueness of the surrounding area while also presenting the MICE property as part of the destination. On the other hand, DMOs might even have links and control over MICE properties, where those properties are part-funded by public money. The Wellington Convention Centre is a good example of this relationship.

Within the DMO category, the results of the audit showed that the most popular links were individual regional destination websites rather than the national tourism websites. For instance, from a MICE property in Rotorua, the local DMO website (www.rotoruanz.co.nz) was a more popular link than the national TNZ website (www.purenz.com). One example even featured links to all other regional destination websites in the country. All interview subjects emphasised that it was a minimum “requirement” for a MICE property website “to link to the destination websites”.

Where most MICE websites focus on links to DMOs, many other important links are neglected. Presenting information on suppliers of services such as catering, signage, advertising, etc. could provide more comprehensive information for a MICE activity organiser. However, the Web audit finds only links to caterers. In interview, a MICE property operator pointed out that “Listing links of event organisers can also be a good strategic partnership”. For the community, some links were also omitted. A NZCA

representative emphasised, “In the case of a convention centre, local accommodation, restaurants and location details are important”. Users do not need to search for all this information if they are handy. However, links to local restaurants and local businesses were generally neglected in the case of NZ. The links selected by NZ MICE website do not always appear to be carefully planned.

5.1.3 INDIVIDUAL VS GROUP EFFORT

Although various websites provide different links to local activities, attractions, leisure, sport, parks, and lifestyle information, there is no one website which includes all of these links. One example provides links on regional destination websites, local sport, local museums, local parks, special interest groups and accommodation. When an organizer is searching information from the Web on planning an event and the pre and post-activity trip, all those local businesses linked to the MICE property gain exposure to the market. In this case, a MICE property website can become a portal/vortal of the local area which creates a platform for all the local businesses to advertise and gain exposure. The MICE property, if fully integrated into the Web, can act as an economic hub, both virtually and physically, to foster networks for local development.

Several stakeholders interviewed felt that the linkage element of NZ MICE websites was weak, and they felt this had negative impacts on the overall performance of the properties. One interviewee noted that “a MICE property website can be the portal that allows all the local businesses to gain exposure; especially when the MICE property is a signature property or an icon of the destination.” Another interviewee stated “Reciprocal linking not only increases traffic in a good way, but also stimulates business relations and the synergy of businesses opportunities”. However, several

others noted, “A MICE property has the potential to be the hub of the community with the condition that the property operator must understand the destination in order to present the whole image via the website”. The difficulties associated with building and maintaining these types of linkages can be solved by planning effectively for these external relationships. A clear understanding of the destination and the wishes of the local businesses are necessary prior to forming such a strategy (Lau et al., 2003; Mason et al., 2003).

5.2 STRATEGIC LINKS AND CONDITIONAL LINKS

Previous researchers such as Doolin et al. (2002) and Rachman & Buchanan (1999a; 1999b) considered “hot links” to other websites as a feature characterising more sophisticated websites. All interviewees agreed links are important and the key is relevancy. One MICE property operator noted, “It’s not how many links...as long as they are relevant. The key is how the links are incorporated into the whole website with a nice and tight flow.”

Interviewees believed all categories of links found are crucial to a MICE website although none of the websites audited had all types of links. Links that are relevant and necessary are classified as *strategic* links. On the other hand, *conditional* links are related links that can only be included when such features are available. A summary of the important linkages raised by the interviewees is presented in Figure 14. It is possible to infer a proposed linkage strategy from this summary. The proposed strategy includes all the strategic and conditional links raised by the interviewees.

| Category | | Strategic Links | Conditional Links |
|------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Business | <i>Associations</i> | Related Travel Associations & Travel Agents | Professional Organisation |
| | <i>Partners</i> | Affiliated Hotels/Venues, Related Businesses of the Group, & Related Partners | Web Developer |
| | <i>Suppliers</i> | Caterer, Event Organiser, Accommodation, All Suppliers | |
| Community | <i>DMO</i> | Local, Regional, National | |
| | <i>Local Attractions</i> | Activities, Attractions, Leisure, Lifestyle, Museum, Park, Resort, Restaurant, & Sport | |
| | <i>Societies</i> | Government (City, County, Region), Local Business Organisation, & Working & Living Info | Charity |
| Supporting | <i>Shareware</i> | | Document Viewing, Multimedia |
| | <i>Tool</i> | | Map |

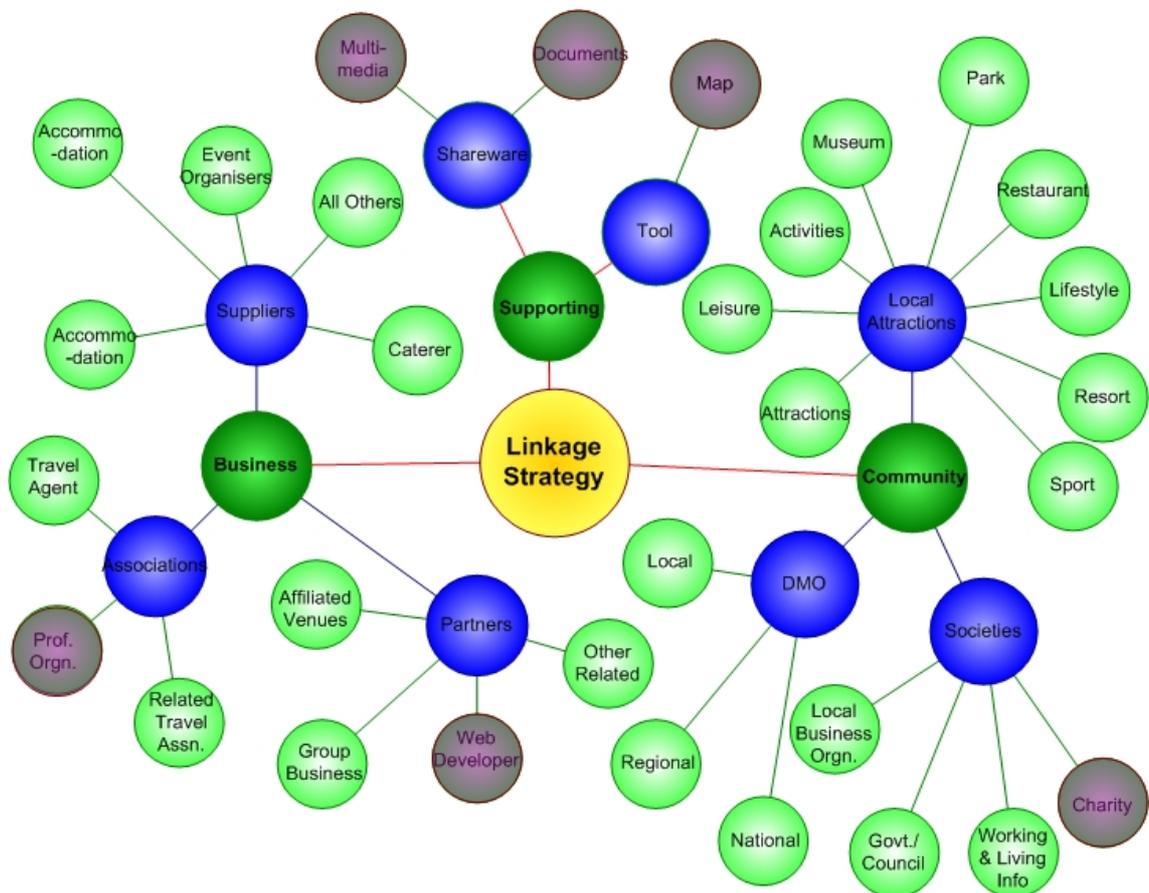


Figure 14 Proposed Linkage Strategy

Depending on the content of the website, some links would need more emphasis; especially links that can construct the local destination's image, such as the links in the 'Community' category. However, links in the 'Community' category are often

neglected. Only half of websites included them. Though all interviewed subjects have a different point of view, they all believed the most important external links are ‘Local Attractions’, ‘DMO’ and ‘Societies’. Such informative links are particularly important for pre and post-trip planning in relation to MICE activities. A representative from NZCA emphasised, “It is important to provide information on the surrounding infrastructure and attractions as it can affect the organiser’s, as well as individual attendees’, impression of the location during the decision making process”.

The results of the Web audit showed all MICE properties with affiliated businesses featured links to their other members in the same group or chain. Interviewees also believed that links to ‘Affiliated Hotels/Venues’, and ‘Related Businesses of the Group’ were important links they didn’t want to omit. A MICE property operator pointed out in the interview that “MICE activity organisers can easily identify who are the client’s ‘relatives’ and ‘enemies’ and select the appropriate venue.” Moreover, a majority of the interviewees agreed that featuring business partners’ links is required, in order to advertise the strategic alliance.

Though interviewees believed all links were crucial, some links are important to a greater or lesser extent depending on the nature of the MICE property. For example, if the website already features a ‘Location/Map’, it is not necessary to link to Wise’s Maps. While those interviewed felt that some MICE websites had made inroads into developing the potential for the properties to work as local ‘hubs’ or portals, all felt that there is considerable work still to be done to enable the full potential of the Web in this respect, while also improving individual enterprise performance.

5.3 EXTRINSIC VALUE MATRIX

Based on the model in Figure 7, the extrinsic value is measured by inclusiveness of the strategic and conditional links. The results of the Web analysis were presented in a Extrinsic Value Matrix. (Figure 15.) The extrinsic value matrix benchmarks a website’s level of linkage creation. With both horizontal and vertical axes focusing on links, the Extrinsic Value Matrix also reflects the external relationships of the MICE websites, as well as the property, to the surrounding economic structure.

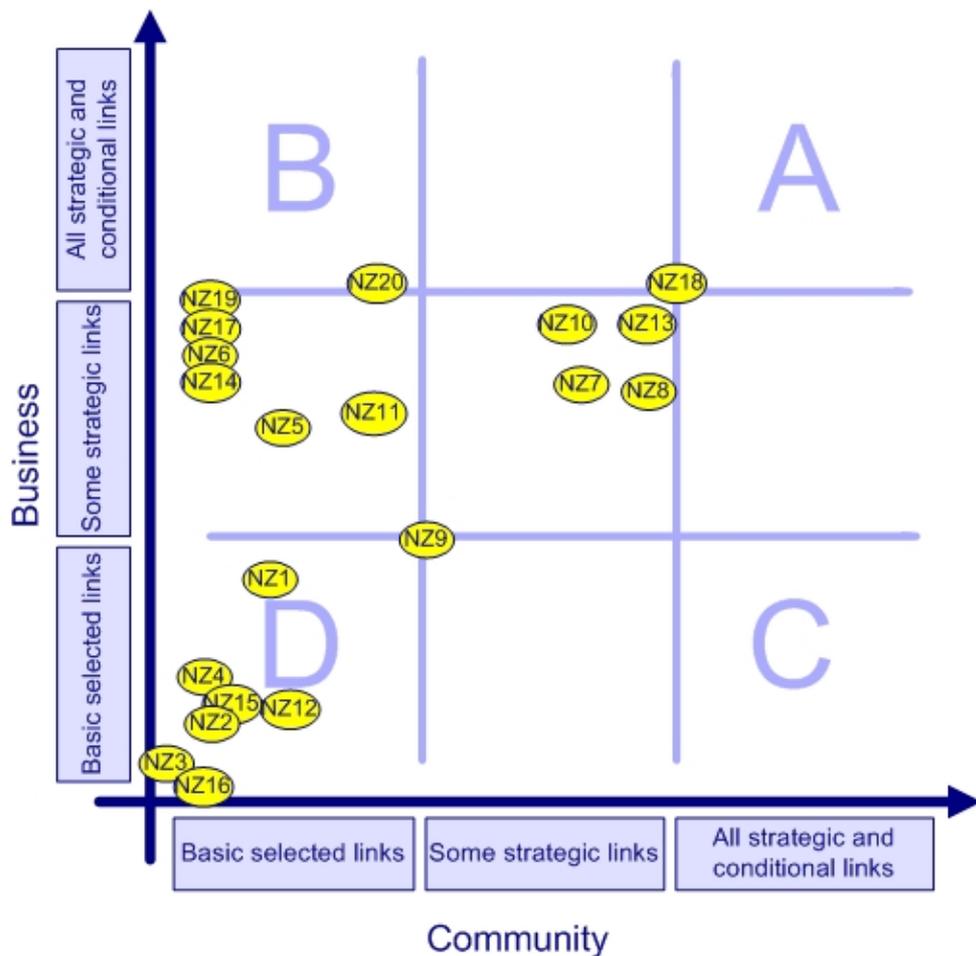


Figure 15 Matrix of Extrinsic Value for NZ Examples

Websites with a more sophisticated external relationship to the community progress from left to right on the x-axis. Websites with inferior community link strategies have

only basic selected links to the community: a typical example would be links to the local DMO. Websites with improved community link strategies have related strategic links, including selected local attractions and related societies/associations. Websites with the most community focus have all the related strategic and conditional links. All related links in the categories of DMO, local attractions, and societies are included.

Websites characterised by improved business strategic links progress from the bottom to the top of the y-axis. Examples of these links include selected partners like affiliated hotels; suppliers such as event organisers; and associations including travel agents. Websites with enhanced business link strategies have related strategic links. These websites have links to most of their partners and the relevant associations, as well as to suppliers. Websites with the best strategy have links to all related strategic and conditional links. Having business links was clearly seen by interviewees as leading to more exposure for local business.

Websites with the best external linkages to the local surroundings are located in Sector A while the poorest performing cases lie in Sector D. Examples in Sector B have websites that emphasise related business links (not necessarily local) while being relatively neglectful of other local community elements and products. On the contrary, websites in Sector C have placed a high priority on community linkages. Neither Sector B nor C makes use of the full potential of the Web strategy.

With nearly 40% of websites scattered around Sector D, NZ MICE websites are clearly shown to mainly work in isolation. A majority of the audited websites feature links but most neglected local businesses, community and related sectors. Some websites audited have made inroads into developing the potential for the MICE properties to work as

hubs that foster LED. Shantytown (NZ18) is the NZ example with the highest extrinsic value. Figure 16 displays the link structure of Shantytown.

| | | Links | Enterprise Examples |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Business | Suppliers | <i>Accommodation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formerly the Blackball Hilton ○ Kapitea Ridge Country Lodge and Cottage ○ Lake Bunner Lodge |
| | Association | <i>Special Interest Group</i> | ○ The Ghost Town Webring |
| | | <i>Travel Agents</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kea West Coast Tour ○ Pacific Horizon ○ Jasons ○ Aroha Tours ○ NZ Tourism On-line ○ Green Kiwi Tour |
| | Partners | <i>Rental Car</i> | ○ Campervanz.com |
| <i>Web Developer</i> | | ○ OGG Ltd | |
| Community | DMO | <i>Regional</i> | ○ Tourism West Coast |
| | Local Attractions | <i>Activities</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eco Rafting Adventure ○ On Yer Bike Adventure ○ Wild West Adventure |
| | | <i>Museum</i> | ○ Museumstuff.com |
| | | <i>Park</i> | ○ Greymouth Seaside Top 10 Holiday Park |
| | | <i>Restaurant</i> | ○ Te Kowhai Reception Lounge |
| | Societies | <i>Local Business Organisation</i> | ○ Nzlive.com |
| <i>Working & Living Info</i> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NZ-infocentre ○ Uk2nz | |

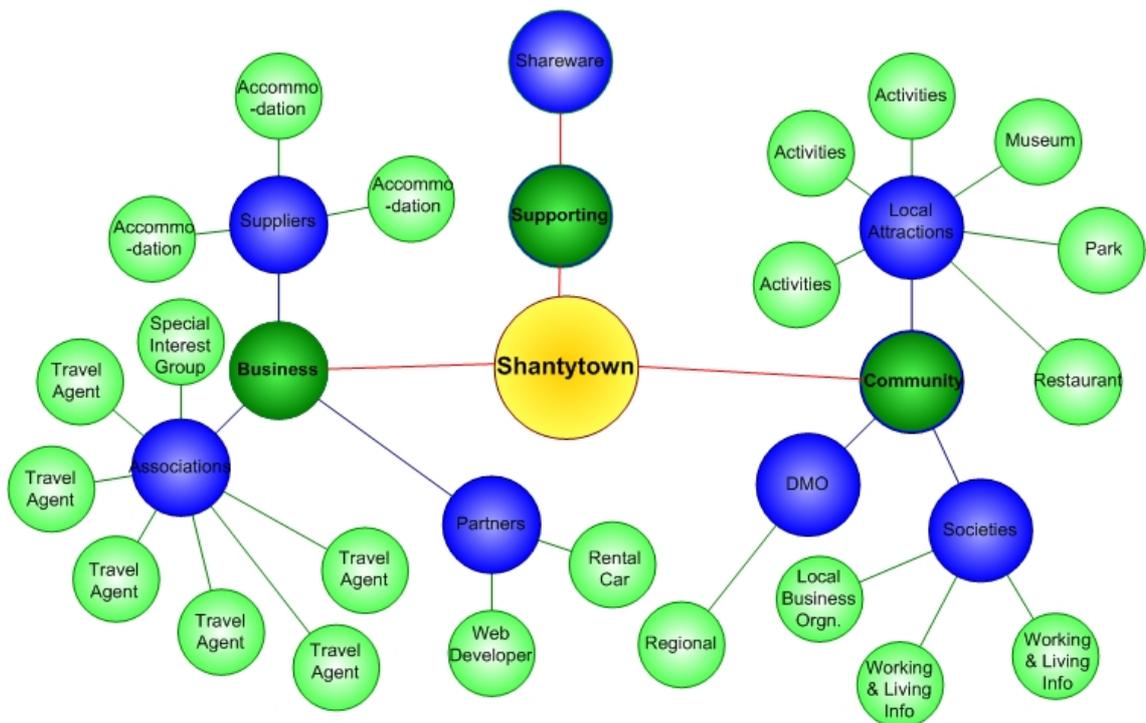


Figure 16 Links Found on the Shantytown Website

Shantytown is a faithfully restored replica of an 1860's West Coast gold mining town. Its website (www.shantytown.co.nz) includes business links to its accommodation suppliers, various travel agents and different tours, as well as partners such as a rental car company. Shantytown also builds good external community relationships in a way that the whole destination can be presented. Major local activities, local museums, local parks and restaurants are linked to. Any potential MICE attendees can easily find out all necessary travel information and plan their pre and post activity trips via Shantytown's website. The DMO and association links also provide background information on the identity of the local area which helps in promoting the whole destination.

5.3.1 INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

Putting the Web audit results for international MICE websites into the same matrix of extrinsic value, a slightly different phenomenon was found. Figure 17 displays the extrinsic value matrix for the international examples audited. There are two examples that fall into sector A. These two examples fully integrated the capability of the Web to become hubs that foster networks of the local economy. The international example with the highest extrinsic value is I'10, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham (NEC).

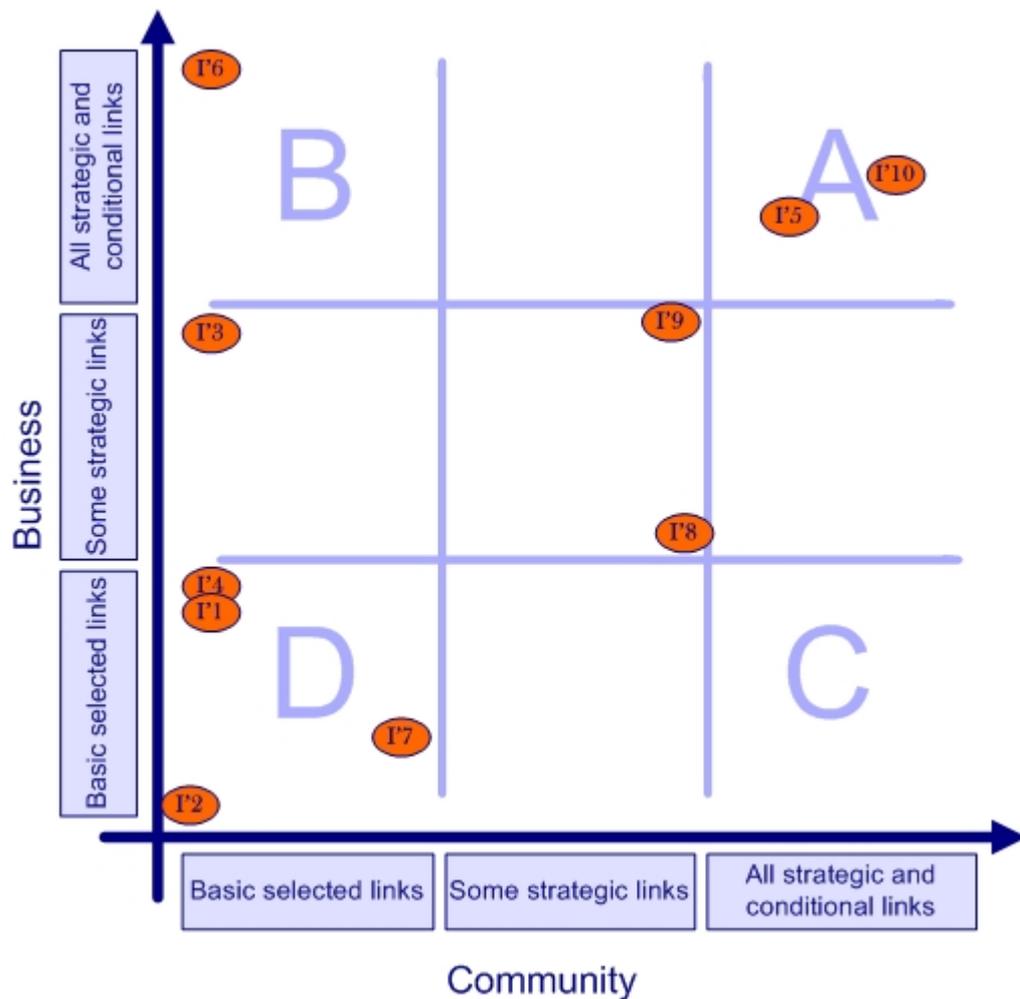


Figure 17 Matrix of Extrinsic Value for International Examples

NEC’s website includes some links in every identified category. Figure 18 demonstrates the links structure of NEC. The number of links is among the highest of all websites audited. The nature of the links is carefully planned so that they can assist in depicting and presenting the destination. Its business links include all exhibition suppliers, all affiliated Hotels and Venues, related group businesses, related partners, event organisers, related associations, and all accommodation providers in the region. Moreover, its community links feature the Birmingham DMO, all local attractions in terms of activities, leisure, museums, parks, resorts, sports, and restaurants in the region. The Birmingham urban government and local businesses organisation websites are also connected. The site incorporates weather information and search functions.

| | | Links | Enterprise Examples |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Business | Suppliers | <i>Event Organisers</i> | Consultants and Mgmt. companies |
| | | <i>Accommodation</i> | o Crown Plaza Hotel All hotels in the region |
| | | <i>Other suppliers</i> | o Box office o All exhibition suppliers |
| | Association | <i>Related Association</i> | o Orchestra organisation |
| | Partners | <i>Affiliated Hotels/Venues</i> | o nec arena, nia, icc, & the symp |
| | | <i>Related Group Businesses</i> | NEC Group |
| Community | | <i>Related Partners</i> | Airports |
| | DMO | <i>Local</i> | o Birmingham |
| | Local Attractions | <i>Activities</i> | All activities |
| | | <i>Attractions</i> | All attractions |
| | | <i>Leisure</i> | All leisure in the region |
| | | <i>Lifestyle</i> | o Nightlife |
| | | <i>Museum</i> | All museums in the region |
| | | <i>Park</i> | All parks in the region |
| | | <i>Resort</i> | All resorts in the region |
| | | <i>Sport</i> | All sports in the region |
| | | <i>Restaurant</i> | All restaurants in the region |
| | Societies | <i>Government</i> | o Birmingham |
| | | <i>Local Business Organisation</i> | o Marketing & Promotion org |

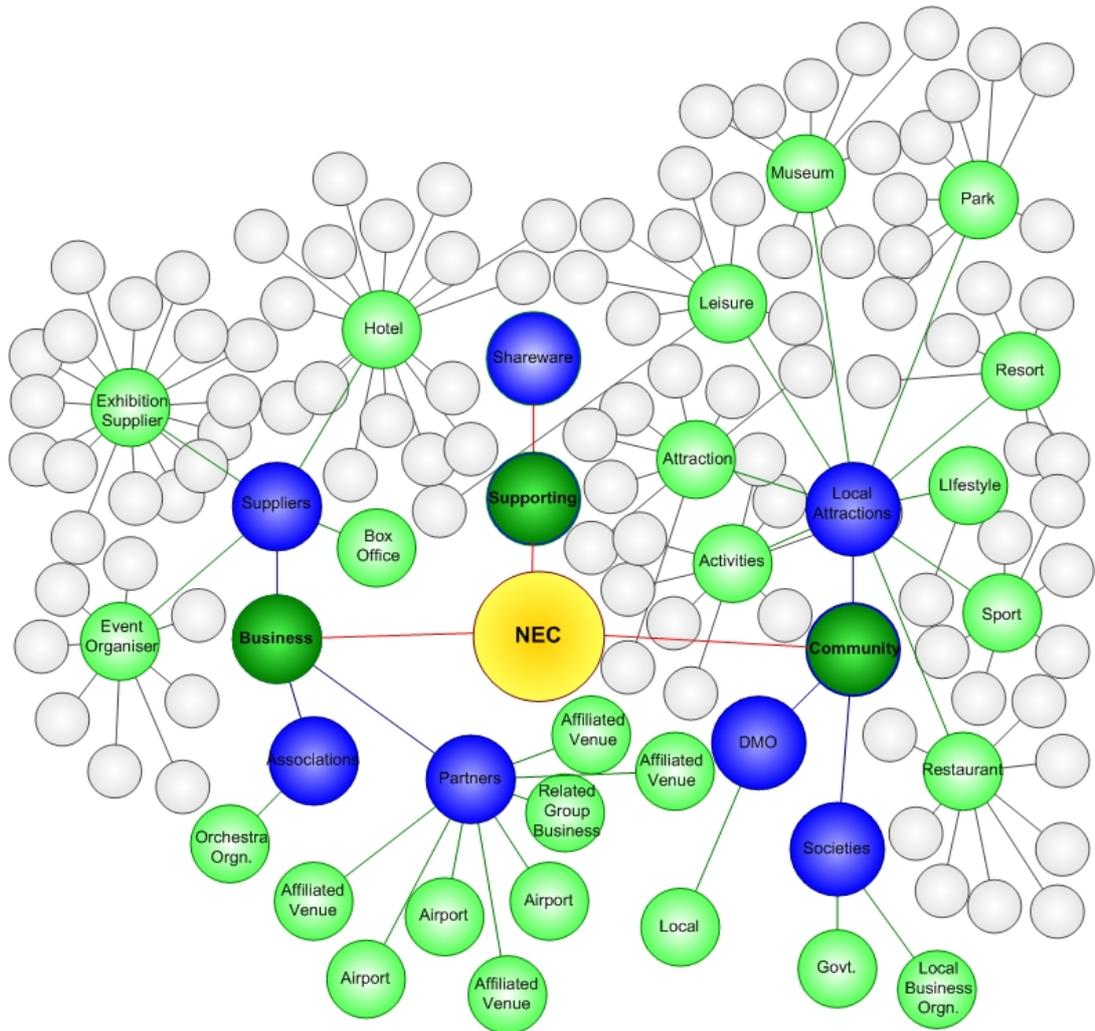


Figure 18 Link Mapping of NEC

5.4 CONCLUSION

While all the interview subjects agreed links can form a powerful strategy, none of the MICE properties where interviewees work had identified the LED objective as the priority when it first developed the website. The influence on local development in these cases was just a bi-product of the MICE website. A MICE property will always tend to focus on improving the bottom line but good external links help to improve individual performance while also creating the potential for LED. Although LED will never really be a priority, it is an important spin-off from improved local linkages.



CHAPTER 6 APPLICATION OF A PROPOSED WEB STRATEGY

A normative Web strategy will include all the relevant and appropriate website features along with content that is accurate and current. The website will be widely distributed with a strong linkage strategy. This chapter first discusses the overall performance of the audited examples. A proposed Web strategy is developed in which the intrinsic part is relatively easy to achieve while the extrinsic factors are far more complex and difficult to manage. The focus here is on the linkage strategy.

To study the potential the Web can play, this thesis uses a case study. Among various strategic initiatives for LED, this thesis focuses on a case that uses “investment in site for business” (MICE) and “investment in soft infrastructure” (ICT) as an option to achieve “sectoral development” as well as to “encourage local business growth”. (See also Table 1 in page 7.) The MICE property used in this thesis, Te Kahurangi (TK), is a proposed Maori-owned convention centre project in the Horowhenua District.

6.1 BEST EXAMPLE WITH A STRATEGIC WEB PRESENCE

If the results of both intrinsic and extrinsic values are combined, the website with the best practice can easily be located. (Figure 19.) Websites audited among all NZ and international samples are included. An international example, I'10, the NEC in Birmingham, has the highest overall performance. In terms of intrinsic value, the NEC has omitted 10 features that were suggested by industry key players. However, its extrinsic value is among the highest with well-rounded links to local business and

community. NZ MICE websites, however, are lower in general in terms of extrinsic value.

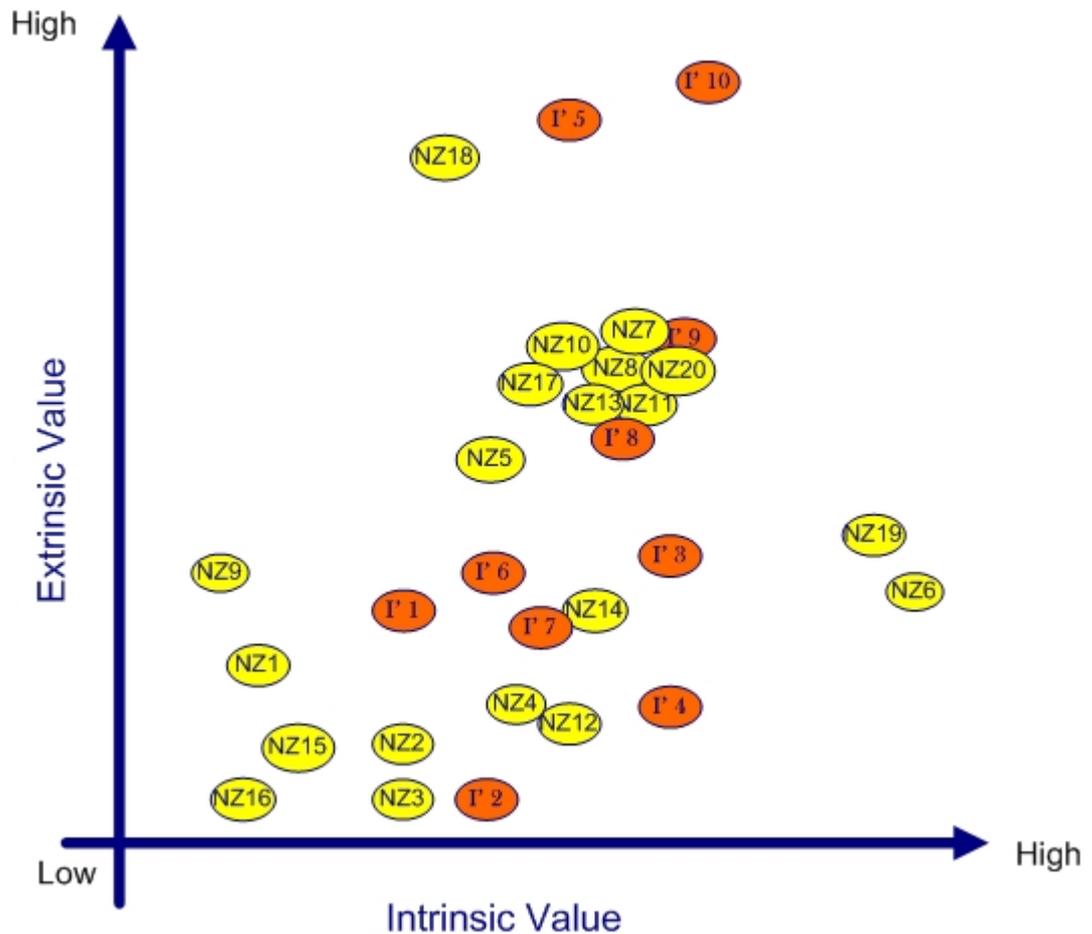


Figure 19 Overall Performance of Audited Examples

6.2 PROPOSED LINKAGE STRATEGY

Improving the intrinsic value of a website requires a well-developed content management system and thus can be achieved by working closely with the Web development and marketing teams. However, increasing the extrinsic value of a website is more difficult and requires a linkage strategy. The key here is to plan

carefully with the different stakeholders in the destination. A clear focus is on local business and community linkages. To map out the details of such linkage planning, a web developer needs to understand the background of the MICE property, the target market, marketing strategy, and the surrounding area. In addition, the following assumptions are important when working out this linkage strategy. (Table 13.)

| ASSUMPTIONS | |
|--|--|
| Sole Geographical Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an external environment (to the MICE property) represents one geographical (local) area because the focus here is local economic development |
| Readiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all local enterprises and participating organisations have websites and are ready to be connected |
| Willingness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the hub website (MICE website) is willing to link to websites of this external environment • all local enterprises and participating organisations are willing to link to the hub |
| Homogeneous Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all websites are equally important and with excellent quality |
| Non-existing Implicit Competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implicit competition is simply non-existing |

Table 13 Assumptions for the Proposed Linkage Strategy

The development of localised linkages involves careful planning. To be able to connect to the strategy, the key elements of community informatics, especially the concept of web-raising and different phases of virtual community building can be introduced to assist the enterprises (Milne & Mason, 2001). Some community involvement in Web development can create a marketing tool that better reflects local needs and aspirations and aids in enhancing local economic linkages (Milne & Mason, 2001). To show how such an approach might be put into place, the thesis now moves on to look at the case of a proposed MICE property that has embraced elements of this linkage strategy.

6.3 TE KAHURANGI

TK's team plans to develop a Conference Centre with tourism initiatives (Milne et al., 2001). The project aims to improve the earning capability of Hapu by creating an associated income stream, as well as developing and managing local natural, cultural and historical resources (Milne et al., 2001). The ultimate goal of building this MICE property is to bring greater economic benefits to the region through MICE tourism. Other than conference facilities, TK is planned to be a multi-purpose property which will have 100 rooms of accommodation, dining and catering services, a swimming pool and spa, and tour packages. The whole property will have Internet access and all the latest technology. Although the TK plan includes an accommodation facility, it places more emphasis on its MICE function. TK's development team is currently in the process of developing its website. While the project has a clear goal to be the driver for LED, TK's development team has to respond to different stakeholders such as government, industry and private enterprise.

6.4 CONTEXT

Te Kahurangi (TK) is a proposed Maori-controlled conference and cultural centre project in the Horowhenua District of NZ. TK's proposed site is located between Levin and Foxton with State Highway 1 cutting a busy path through the area. (Figure 20.) TK will be built on the Ngati Huia ki Poroutawhao ki Huia Marae. State Highway 1 (SH1) plays an important role in the area's economy. It has physically shaped the businesses of Levin, which line up along the length of SH1, taking advantage of the high traffic volumes and therefore higher exposure offered by the main street. Transit New Zealand estimates that 13,200-vehicles/day pass through the stretch of SH1 close to site of Te Kahurangi. The location is 60-minutes drive north of Wellington, the capital of NZ.



Figure 20 Location Map of Te Kahurangi

Applying the proposed strategy to this case, a geographical parameter of “local” has to be defined prior to forming a linkage strategy. Horowhenua district has three major towns: Levin, Foxton and Shannon. (See also Figure 20.) The businesses in the area focus on the primary and secondary sectors. In the primary industry, sheep and dairy farming are large players, with a huge variety of food manufacturing. In the secondary sector, there are numerous small factories with a particular focus on garment production. The business hub of the Horowhenua area is in Levin which contains the secondary industry factories, local services and much of the area’s population.

Levin is also home to the Horowhenua District council and the Horowhenua Information Centre. According to the most recent census, the population of the Levin area in 2001 was 15,189. The settlement of Foxton is the first town north of the

proposed site. The area is charming and has several attractions including Foxton Beach. The population of Foxton is 4,515. Shannon is the third town forming a triangle around the proposed site. Shannon has a population of 1,377. Situated inland off State Highway 1, Shannon has one major attraction, Owlcartraz, a ‘tourist and educational park’, known for its wildlife tours. Some peripheral areas such as Otaki and Kapiti are also part of the district.

Levin, Foxton, and Shannon are all experiencing a decline in population. The relatively large (14%) Maori population in the region brings with it a requirement to further develop the economic and employment base of Maori people in the future and also take indigenous perspectives into close consideration in future economic and employment planning for the region (Statistic NZ 2002). The region also has an unemployment rate higher than the national average. Ohakea airport, northwards near Bulls, has recently laid off approximately 300 employees. The impact on the Bulls community will be significant. Ripples of this will be felt through to Levin and Foxton. A member of the local economic development trust noted that “the establishment of TK is a key initiative to create employment”.

While TK will operate as a privately run conference centre, its vision statement asserts that the project will:

- Develop a Conference Centre with tourism initiatives;
- Improve the capability of Hapu by creating an associated income stream as well as developing and managing the local natural, cultural and historical resources in return of whanau (people) and community development;
- Strengthen and develop advantages of areas outside urban centres that provide services to meet the district’s needs;

- Develop a Youth Program that will challenge and enhance participants' knowledge of their personal self-worth and the ability to set and achieve goals.

Other than full conferencing facilities, TK will have 100 rooms for accommodation, swimming pool and spa, tour packages, chauffeurs, Marae stays (under special conditions), and dining and catering services. The whole property will be equipped with the latest technology. TK will develop tourism products based on three distinctive packages: Puri Mahara (Historic), Takaro (Sports), and Hikaka (Adventurous). TK can cater to MICE activities ranging from small meetings of 10 to exhibitions of 1000 plus. With its flexible layout, the main hall of TK can be divided into three large venues in addition to the 12 individual rooms.

The ultimate goal of TK is to create a profitable MICE property and to bring greater economic benefits to the region. The importance attached to this initiative by government can be seen by the fact that the Community Employment Group (CEG) has provided a field worker to work hand-in-hand with TK. Another partner for this project is Te Puni Kokiri (TPK), a government funded agency established specifically to create Maori economic development initiatives. A public-private partnership forms the base of the TK project

According to the feasibility study (Milne et al., 2001) and a trustee member of the Horowhenua/Kapiti Economic Development Board, people in the area are very supportive of the notion of a conference centre because tourism is seen as an important factor in enhancing people's pride in place, along with the possible economic benefits of tourism growth. Moreover, local people felt that sectors other than tourism would benefit directly from these developments. It is expected that \$390,000 out of every

million dollar of guests' expenditure at TK will circulate as local income. Meanwhile, 33 local jobs will be generated by every \$1 million in revenue (Milne et al., 2001). TK is expected to be an important driver for LED.

TK's target market can be divided into three categories: 70% corporate, 15% government and 15% association. Given TK's proximity to the seat of government, it is expected to receive a level of patronage from government bodies higher than the national average. For the corporate market, TK will be positioned as a conference get-away for incentives, workshops, and corporate retreats. The quality service will be a key marketing emphasis. For those price-sensitive sectors such as health and education, TK can also provide a cheaper alternative to a central Wellington venue. The cultural experience of the Marae is another promotional factor.

6.5 THE ROLE OF ICT

Given the desire of the developers of TK to stimulate local economic opportunities, it is clear that the linkage to and communication with surrounding businesses and people is vital. With the economic linkages to strengthen support for the development process, and to create more income and employment, attempts have been made early on to nurture supply relationships and to create a 'community' of businesses and households who share a vested interest in seeing the establishment of the conference centre and its later developments to succeed. ICT, particularly the Web, can be an effective tool to gather community input and to disseminate information on the development and growth of the facility.

6.5.1 THE ROLE OF THE WEB

According to TK's business plan, TK should use ICT as effectively as possible to enhance its business profitability and performance for the broader community. This will necessitate having access to a competent website developer. A suggestion was also made to TK to create a website that covers the areas of marketing, database of planners, free website services for events, and linkage to all surrounding areas, including a basic webpage for those businesses lacking a Web presence. Figure 21 demonstrates a sample page from TK's development website which includes the key information for its clients and users, MICE activity planners and attendees.

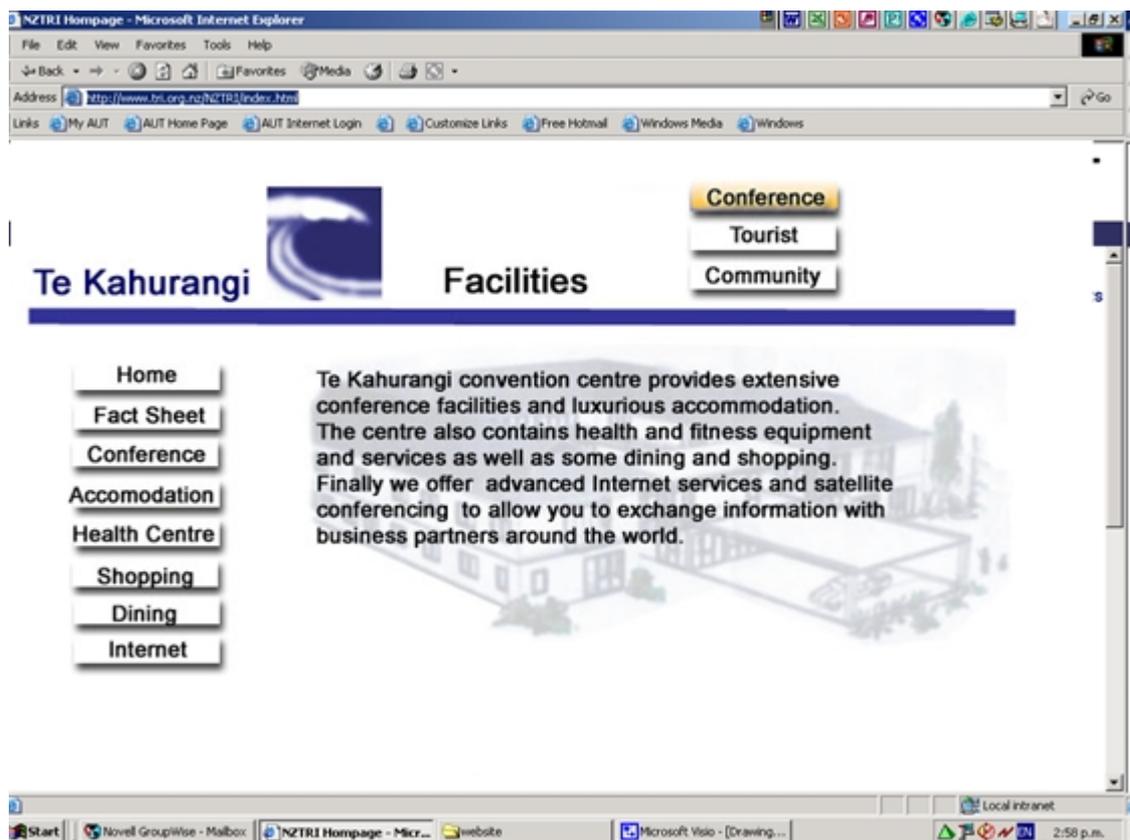


Figure 21 Conference Page for Te Kahurangi's Development Site

According to TK's head developer, the development team expects a website to link tourism with other sectors, encourage networking, facilitate skills transfer, educate

visitors and locals, increase local inputs, attract targeted visitors and act as a base for future development. An underlying focus is that all linked businesses are actually members of the community. Thus local festivals, cultural activities and attractions are all linked to the proposed site. (Figure 22.)

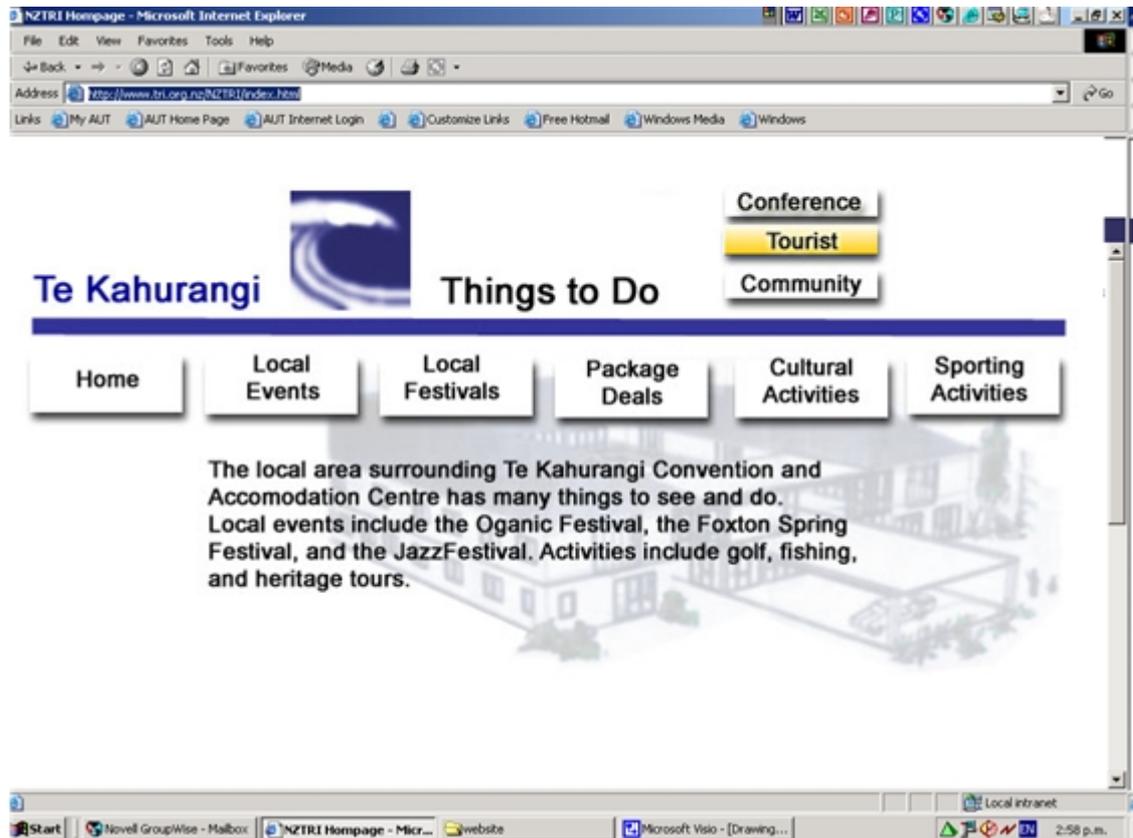


Figure 22 Tourist Page of Te Kahurangi's Development Site

Moreover, businesses work better as components of networks. The Horowhenua/Kapiti Economic Development Board expects TK to act as focus in its community, supporting the ecommerce of suppliers, and channelling businesses to and from the partners. Figure 23 also demonstrates a sample link. Owlcatraz, a tourist and education park, is one of the top attractions of Horowhenua. By having a link to this website, MICE organisers can easily realise what pre and post activities can be arranged together with the MICE activity. The link also depicts the area's characteristics. While Owlcatraz

can reciprocally gain exposure to all the users, including organisers and attendees of the MICE activities, linking creates mutual benefits to both TK and the local businesses.

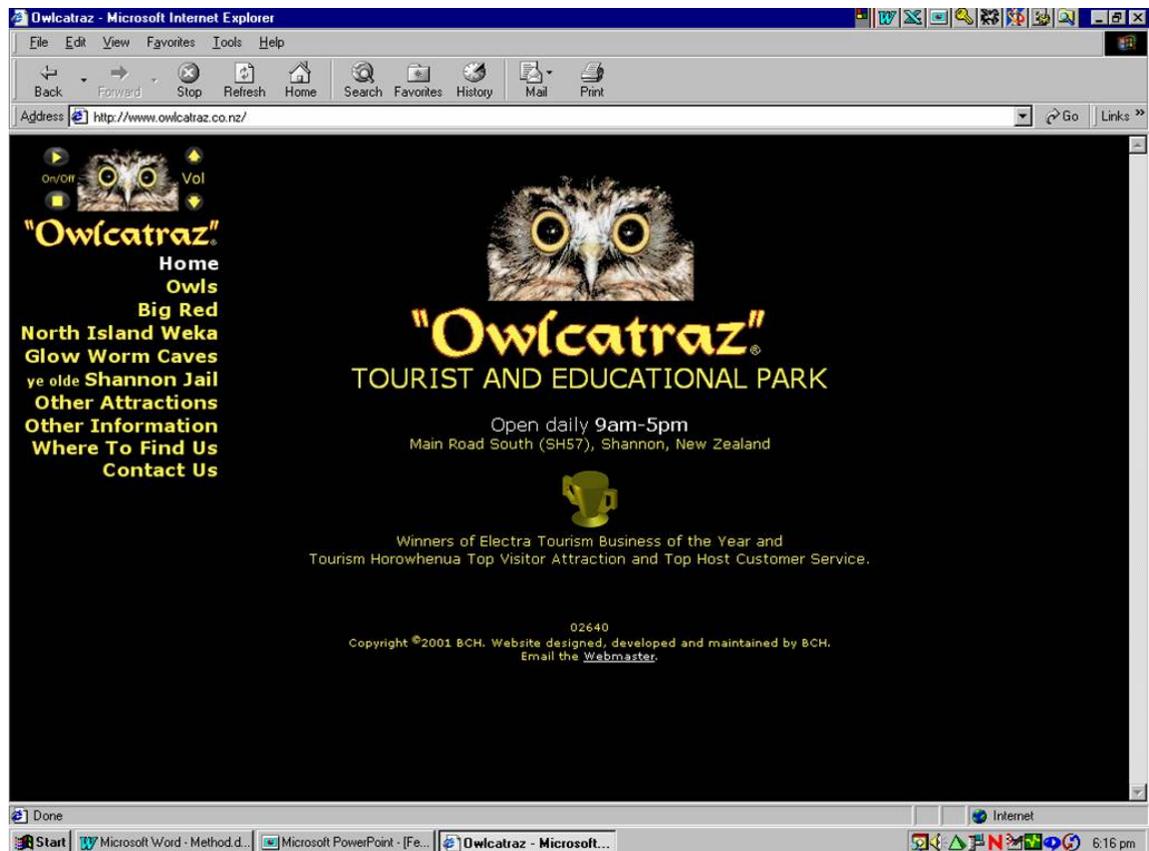


Figure 23 A Sample Link to the Te Kahurangi Development Site

Equally important, however, is the need to link into the local community of residents and hosts. The TK website is designed as a resource for local people as well as MICE activity planners and attendees. At the property developing and building stage, the website will have a forum area where local residents and business people can discuss issues relating to the development and growth of the facility. It also has an aim to facilitate local partnership. Since the TK project is an “investment in soft infrastructure” LED initiative, it is also hoped that the website will include materials of interest to local schools that can incorporate elements of the activities into their tourism

and local studies curricula. Figure 24 displays a sample community page from the TK site.

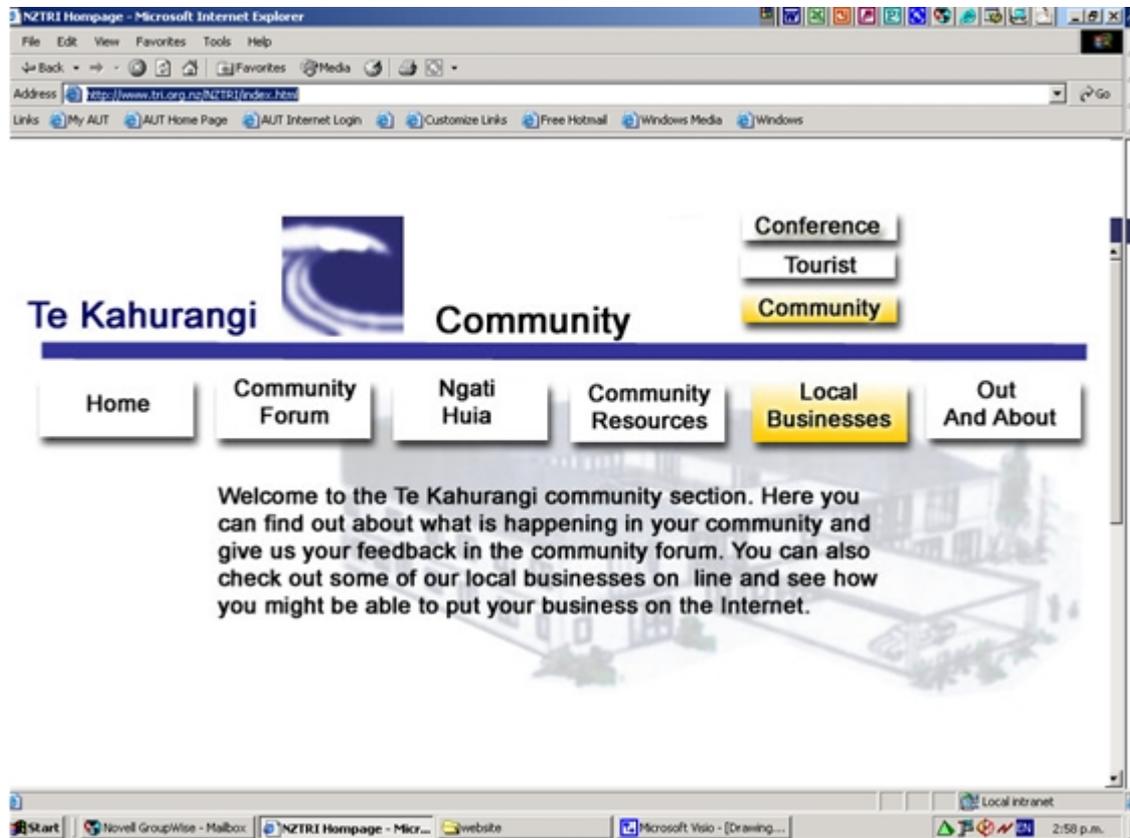


Figure 24 Community Page from Te Kahurangi's Development Website

Thus, the website becomes not only an important resource for the property itself but also for the surrounding community of residents and businesses. The hope is that such a multi-faceted website will also appeal to MICE activity organisers and attendees that want to visit a place that offers cultural and environmental experiences that are different for the norm found in the nearby cities of Wellington and Palmerston North. Figure 25 displays a sample link presenting the community.



Figure 25 Sample Link Showing the Community

To be able to connect to the strategy, the key elements of community informatics, especially the concept of web-raising and the different phases of virtual community building can be introduced to assist the enterprises (Milne & Mason, 2001). Community involvement in Web development can create a marketing tool that better reflects local needs and aspirations and aids in enhancing local economic linkages (Milne & Mason, 2001). TK can also provide a website which helps individual enterprises to develop and host a webpage. In the meantime, the process of building a website can bring the community together. It is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the essence of a virtual community and how members are involved in terms of who and what their fundamental needs are in the context of virtual communities (Wang et al., 2002).

Mason and Milne's (2002) three-phases methodology of building a website with the participation of local people is an innovative idea to assist enterprises that lack a Web presence. Phase one involves seeking permission and measuring needs. Phase two is used to demonstrate possibilities, build 'Pride in place', establish capability, and develop a joint plan. The final phase is when a prototype website is built and skills are transferred to the local people. An iterative development is then worked out and the ownership of the website is finally transferred to the local people.

6.5.2 LINK MAPPING

The key to reaching the full potential of the Web is to have an effective linkage strategy. The linkage mapping phase requires careful planning right from the beginning. To map out the possible useful links, a thorough selection process is involved. Potential links are considered based on specific spatial and sectoral criteria according to the proposed strategy. The links should connect enterprises in the local area. In this case, the 'local' geographical parameter includes three main towns: Levin, Foxton, and Shannon, as well as the peripheral area of Otaki and Kapiti. To coincide with the products and service of TK, any enterprise that has a potential relationship with TK is included.

TK's research partner, NZTRI, together with CEG and TPK, are assisting in organizing a process of webpage development based on participatory community interaction. Enterprise Horowhenua and various economic and businesses trustees are also involved in connecting different sectors who are in need of developing such a joint plan. The goal here is to establish a website which is capable of fostering economic linkages. TK's Web development process is now going through the first two phases of

implementing a participative website. The final phase will involve assisting those local enterprises without a web presence and transferring the skill and ownership of the website to the community.

The current array of links from TK's development website is presented in Table 15. By going through various directories of business organisations, and through discussion with local representatives, possible links are mapped out. The important thing to note is that these proposed links are already being developed before the MICE property is built – with the idea that a comprehensive web-based strategy for LED and property success will be in place right from the start, rather than being 'grafted on' at a later stage.

To achieve the goal of forming a web-based strategy that can reach the Web's potential, the readiness and willingness of local enterprises are important. One of the difficulties of this linkage mapping procedure is that some of the local enterprises lack web presences. Some elements of the linkage strategy model are not applicable to the case of TK. Since TK is not a chain MICE property, there are no affiliated hotels or venues. The local Maori art suppliers and Museums that should be linked do not have websites.

| | | Links | Enterprise Examples | |
|------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Business | Suppliers | <i>Caterer</i> | TK's own team | |
| | | <i>Event Organisers</i> | Not applicable at this stage | |
| | | <i>Accommodation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annandale Bed & Breakfast ○ Fantails Bed & Breakfast ○ Totara Lodge Motel ○ Welcome Inn Motel ○ Bentons Motel ○ Lindisfarne Bed & Breakfast ○ Lindale Farm ○ Cottage Park Motels ○ Byron's Resort ○ Bridge Lodge ○ Bassinger Motor Lodge ○ Greenarces Bed & Breakfast ○ Te Horo Lodge | |
| | | <i>Other suppliers</i> | ○ Organic Cluster | |
| | Association | <i>Related Association</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CEG ○ Te Puni Kokiti | |
| | | <i>Travel Agents</i> | ○ Spotlight Tours | |
| | | <i>Professional Organisation</i> | ○ NZTRI | |
| | Partners | <i>Affiliated Hotels/Venues</i> | Not applicable | |
| | | <i>Related Group Businesses</i> | Not applicable at this stage | |
| | | <i>Related Partners</i> | Not applicable at this stage | |
| | | <i>Web Developer</i> | ○ NZTRI | |
| | Community | DMO | <i>Local</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism Horowhenua ○ Destination Kapiti Coast |
| | | | <i>Regional</i> | ○ Totally Wellington |
| <i>National</i> | | | ○ NZTB | |
| Local Attraction | | <i>Activities</i> | TK's own team | |
| | | <i>Attractions</i> | ○ Celtic Organic Winery | |
| | | <i>Leisure</i> | ○ Levin Golf Club | |
| | | <i>Lifestyle</i> | ○ Organic River Festival | |
| | | <i>Museum</i> | Not applicable | |
| | | <i>Park</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Owlcatraz ○ Levin Motor Camp | |
| | | <i>Resort</i> | Not applicable | |
| | | <i>Sport</i> | ○ Horowhenua Sailing Club | |
| Society | | <i>Restaurant</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Te Kowhai Reception Lounge ○ Heatherlea Lodge | |
| | | <i>Government</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Horowhenua District Council ○ Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council | |
| | | <i>Local Business Organisation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enterprise Horowhenua ○ Horowhenua Economic Development | |
| | | <i>Working & Living Info</i> | ○ A-Z Horowhenua Directory | |
| | | <i>Charity</i> | ○ Nga Manu Nature Reserve | |

Table 14 Proposed Links for TK

6.6 A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INDEX

The proposed linkage strategy is not just a convenient way of providing contact information for local businesses and community sectors. With the participation of local stakeholders, it becomes an important tool that can influence the economic environment. The extrinsic value matrix (Figure 16.) developed from this thesis can be further evolved to a local development index (LDI). Figure 27 presents the idea of this LDI. LDI is an additional element that can be added to Web evaluation especially in cases where LED dimensions are important in terms of business and investors' (e.g. CEG) goals. LDI also indicates the ability of a website as an influencer or enabler to its community economic structure.

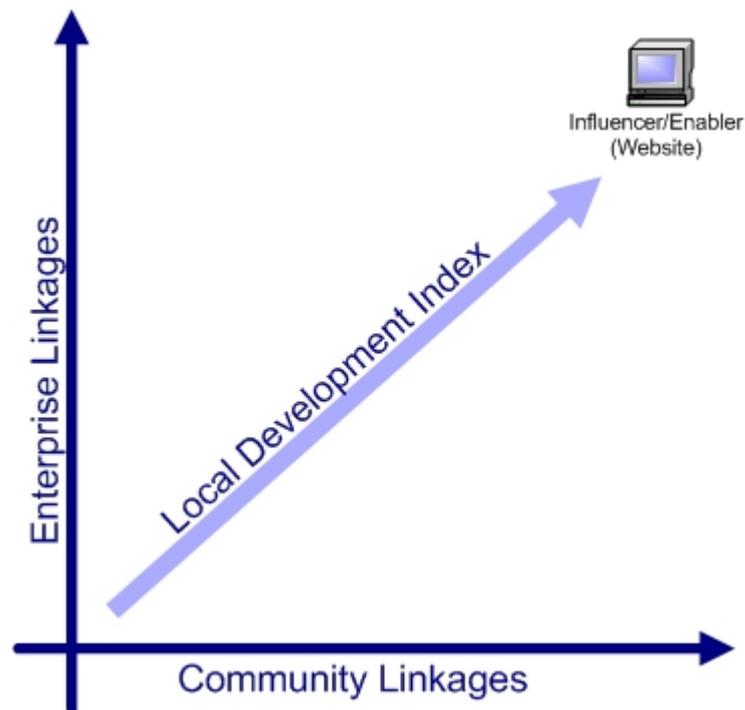


Figure 26 A Local Development Index

6.7 IDEAL MODEL

As a conclusion, an idealised model of a MICE website is presented in Figure 28. In this model the focus is placed on a more balanced mix of intrinsic as well as extrinsic attributes. Such a model can enhance the ability of MICE properties to fulfil the LED expectations that are often held by government funding agencies and supporters.



Figure 27 An Idealised Model

The idea is that these nine different elements comprise a puzzle. All elements in this model are not only individually necessary but also interdependent. When all the different shaped pieces of elements properly combine, the problem of building an ideal website has been solved. To begin with, a committed strategy of ICT application with LED objectives is the necessary initial foundation for the website. Product information for the MICE property is the base of the website. Technical competency enables a quality, accurate and current website. Processing various transactions including on-line planning is impossible without technical competency. When users of the website are in

the process of planning the MICE activity or trip, details of local attractions are fundamental to establishing the identity of the destination. The sectoral linkages of a participative website can be built in terms of a feedback relationship. Networking with the participation of local enterprises can enhance the website's extrinsic value as well as potentially influence local economic structures. Alongside all of the above attributes, this ideal website has to be easily accessible in terms of marketing distribution. Missing any piece of the puzzle makes the picture incomplete. Missing any of the elements makes the Web strategy deficient.

TK provides an interesting case of a greenfield site that is beginning to adopt a comprehensive Web strategy to enhance performance and, as a result, LED. ICT, particularly the Web, can play an important role in this approach to use a MICE property to enhance competitiveness and reinforce the prosperity of both enterprises and the whole destination. However, such virtual networking to foster distribution networks of local businesses can only be formed through careful planning and the cooperation of local people.



CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that more attention must be paid to the links between MICE and local economic development and that it is essential to better understand the potential role that ICT, and particularly the Web, can play in facilitating these links. The Web audit of existing MICE websites in NZ has revealed a rather 'inward looking' approach to Web development and use, with competent websites rarely linking effectively with the surrounding economy and attractions. Not only does this reduce the potential ability for individual MICE properties to generate linkages and localised economic spin-offs, it is also likely to reduce the performance and profitability of the properties themselves.

7.1 INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC VALUES

Previous research has focused mainly on intrinsic values, especially the content of a website, and neglects the important extrinsic values in a Web strategy. This thesis has argued that a comprehensive Web strategy involves a website with high intrinsic and extrinsic values. The intrinsic value can be evaluated based on features, quality and distribution. The key is having appropriate features with the aid of technical competency. The extrinsic value can be evaluated based on community and enterprise linkages. This involves planning and managing the external relationships.

Having a great variety of features does not necessary make for an effective website. Featuring content that customers need is the key. Previous research overemphasised the quantity of features in its definition of a more sophisticated website. In fact, static and interactive content can compliment each other. The popular features on MICE websites

are supplied in response to user demand for assistance in their decision making. The audit in this research also highlighted that NZ MICE websites have strengths in incorporating the branding concept and utilising the Web's visual ability while having a weak promotional function with e-commerce ability being very limited. The intrinsic value can be easily enhanced by the Web development team that understands the MICE property's strategy and has the required technical competency. However, the question raised here is how the website can be connected to further increase its extrinsic value.

The low extrinsic values found in the audit showed a need for improvement. While some of the MICE websites audited feature links to the surrounding economy, most neglect local businesses and related sectors and work in isolation. Even in the best cases reviewed there is considerable work still to be done to activate the full potential of the Web to stimulate and strengthen economic linkages and individual enterprise performance. The in-depth interviews with industry players also show quite clearly that they feel Web linkages and external relationships are a weak point in the current structure and organisation of the NZ MICE sector, and that current web development and implementation is not assisting in addressing these weaknesses as much as it could.

7.2 PROPOSED STRATEGY

This thesis also presents a model of the processes and approaches that can be used to create a MICE Web strategy that not only meets, and strengthens, enterprise performance, but also more effectively connects MICE facilities to surrounding enterprises and destinations. The focus of the linkage strategy incorporates key elements of community informatics, especially web-raising and virtual community

building approaches, alongside more traditional web-based marketing and local economic development approaches.

7.3 PLANNING AND LOCAL ECONOMIC STIMULATION

LED focuses on enhancing regional competitiveness, thus increasing sustainable growth (Urban Development Unit, 2003). LED also offers local private sectors and the community the opportunity to work together to improve the local economy. Of the different options, the case study of this thesis involves initiatives including “investment in sites for business”, i.e. a Conference Centre; “supporting cluster development”, i.e. MICE tourism; as well as “investment in soft infrastructure for encouraging local business community”. By applying a linkage strategy, Te Kahurangi acts as both a physical and a virtual hub.

The case of Te Kahurangi reveals that there is potential for the Web to improve MICE property performance and local economic and community linkages. This particular proposed ‘greenfield’ conference centre is in the advantageous position of being able to plan linkages and networking from the early planning phases. While most properties are not in this position, the case emphasises the need to plan MICE web-presence carefully, and to view the Web as part of the ‘bigger picture’ of overall MICE enterprise strategy. Perhaps most importantly, the case has also highlighted the need to think carefully about how MICE web-presence can build upon and strengthen links to local economic development. The success of the linkage strategy depends on the wishes and participation of local people.

7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

Although this research examines the degree to which the Web is being used as a tool to enhance the contribution of MICE properties to LED, its focus is mainly in the NZ setting. As the findings are based upon the experience of the MICE sector in NZ, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to another country because ICT development and perceptions of the technology may vary from country to country. Besides, the business environment of NZ may also be different from other tourist destinations. Furthermore, samples of the research are selected from the list provided by CINZ, other organizations not in the lists may have a different situation.

7.5 RESEARCH AGENDA

Further research is recommended to supplement the inadequacy of this thesis. While previous studies focused on content when analysing websites, this thesis reviewed both intrinsic and extrinsic values of a Web strategy focusing on content quality and the effective use of links. This thesis recommends that a study similar to this research is conducted outside the NZ context. There may be valuable lessons for other locations and a broader applicability to local economies in other countries to further develop as comparative studies.

The phases of web-raising in terms of implementing a participatory community interaction was discussed in the case study. More studies are recommended to research the phases of the planning process and the implementation of web-raising. A follow-up study of Te Kahurangi can be a starting point when the website and the property's

operations are up-and-running. More case studies can also help to test the applicability of the proposed linkage strategy. A quantitative survey that gathers empirical data on the motivation that lie behind NZ MICE web-site development, and on some of the difficulties that exist in trying to develop websites that meet both enterprise performance and LED objectives is also recommended.



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Appendix I
NZ MICE Properties with Websites

| Location | Venue | Room Type | Capacity |
|----------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Dunedin | Abbey lodge | Theatre | 120 |
| Hamilton | Alcamo Hotel, The | Theatre | 90 |
| Auckland | Allely House | Theatre | 60 |
| Invercargill | Ascot Park Hotel | Theatre | 800 |
| Auckland | Auckland Showgrounds | Theatre | 3000 |
| Auckland | Auckland War Memorial Museum | Theatre | 250 |
| Auckland | Auckland's Waitakere Park Lodge | Theatre | 50 |
| Auckland | Barrycourt Suites - Hotel & Conference Centre | Theatre | 250 |
| Tauranga | Baycourt | Theatre | 600 |
| Nelson | Beachcomber Motor Inn | Theatre | 100 |
| Marlborough | Blenheim Country Lodge Hotel | Theatre | 150 |
| Auckland | Boatshed, The | Theatre | 20 |
| Wellington | Boomrock Lodge | Theatre | 40 |
| Wellington | Brentwood Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Lake Taupo | BridgeTongariro Fishing Resort & Conference Centre | Theatre | 60 |
| Hamilton | Brooklands Country Estate | Theatre | 50 |
| Auckland | Bruce Mason Centre | Theatre | 950 |
| Lake Taupo | Caboose Taupo Hotel | Theatre | 50 |
| Christchurch | Canterbury House | Theatre | 80 |
| Wellington | Capital House & Conference Centre | Theatre | 85 |
| Dunedin | Cargills Hotel | Theatre | 100 |
| Auckland | Carlton Hotel Auckland | Theatre | 750 |
| Airport/Manukau City | Centra Auckland Airport | Theatre | 400 |
| Christchurch | Centra Christchurch | Theatre | 350 |
| Rotorua | Centra Rotorua | Theatre | 300 |
| Christchurch | Chateau Blanc Suites | Theatre | 30 |
| Christchurch | Chateau on the Park | Theatre | 420 |
| Christchurch | Christchurch Convention Centre | Theatre | 2500 |
| Tauranga | Compass Community Village | Theatre | 220 |
| Auckland | Conference Centre, The | Theatre | 200 |
| Auckland | Copthorne Anzac Avenue | Theatre | 120 |
| Auckland | Copthorne Auckland HarbourCity | Theatre | 120 |
| Christchurch | Copthorne Central Christchurch | Theatre | 150 |
| Christchurch | Copthorne Durham Street | Theatre | 220 |
| Lake Taupo | Copthorne Manuels Taupo | Theatre | 140 |
| Wellington | Copthorne Plimmer Towers | Theatre | 200 |
| Queenstown | Copthorne Queenstown Lakefront | Theatre | 160 |
| Bay of Islands | Copthorne Resort Bay of Islands | Theatre | 300 |
| Wellington | Copthorne Resort Solway Park | Theatre | 250 |
| Dunedin | Corstorphine House | Theatre | 50 |
| Christchurch | Cotswold Hotel, The | Theatre | 150 |
| Napier | County Hotel, The | Theatre | 80 |
| Auckland | Crowne Plaza Auckland | Theatre | 500 |
| Christchurch | Crowne Plaza Christchurch | Theatre | 130 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|
| New Plymouth | Devon Hotel, The | Theatre | 400 |
| Location | Venue | Room Type | Capacity |
| Dunedin | Dunedin Art Gallery | Theatre | 180 |
| Dunedin | Dunedin Centre, The | Theatre | 2700 |
| Auckland | Eden Park | Theatre | 1000 |
| Auckland | Edge, The | Theatre | 2450 |
| Wanaka | Edgewater Resort | Theatre | 100 |
| Tauranga | Fantail Lodge | Theatre | 80 |
| Auckland | First Imperial Hotel | Theatre | 80 |
| Whangarei | Flames International Hotel | Theatre | 200 |
| Auckland | Formosa Country Club | Theatre | 200 |
| Whangarei | Forum North Convention Centre | Theatre | 607 |
| Auckland | Fullers Auckland | Theatre | 100 |
| New Plymouth | Grand Central Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Mt Ruapehu | Grand Chateau, The | Theatre | 100 |
| Rotorua | Grand Tiara Hotel Rotorua | Theatre | 500 |
| Lake Taupo | Great Lake Centre | Theatre | 850 |
| Auckland | Heritage Auckland, The | Theatre | 350 |
| Christchurch | Heritage Christchurch, The | Theatre | 125 |
| Hanmer Springs | Heritage Hamner Springs, The | Theatre | 150 |
| Queenstown | Heritage Queenstown, The | Theatre | 120 |
| Auckland | Hilton Auckland, The | Theatre | 450 |
| Auckland | Hobson Motor Inn | Theatre | 160 |
| Tauranga | Hotel Armitage | Theatre | 300 |
| Airport/Manukau City | Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland Airport | Theatre | 200 |
| Christchurch | Hotel Grand Chancellor Christchurch | Theatre | 1200 |
| Wellington | Hotel Raffaele | Theatre | 80 |
| Lake Taupo | Huka Village Conference Centre | Theatre | 100 |
| Auckland | Hyatt Regency Auckland | Theatre | 450 |
| Wellington | James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor | Theatre | 260 |
| Airport/Manukau City | Jet Inn Airport Hotel | Theatre | 60 |
| Nelson | Kimi Ora Spa Resort | Theatre | 60 |
| Bay of Islands | Kingfish Lodge | Theatre | 50 |
| Rotorua | Lake Plaza Rotorua Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Lake Taupo | Lakeland of Taupo | Theatre | 100 |
| Airport/Manukau City | Lakeside Convention Centre | Theatre | 1600 |
| Christchurch | Lincoln University | Theatre | 380 |
| Blenheim | Marlborough Hotel, The | Theatre | 100 |
| Palmerston North | Massey University | Theatre | 495 |
| Queenstown | Mercure Grand Hotel St Mortiz Queenstown | Theatre | 50 |
| Auckland | Mercure Hotel Auckland | Theatre | 300 |
| Queenstown | Millbrook Conference Centre | Theatre | 160 |
| Queenstown | Millennium Queenstown | Theatre | 550 |
| Rotorua | Millennium Rotorua | Theatre | 400 |
| Tauranga | Mills Reef | Theatre | 200 |
| Rotorua | Moose Lodge & Golf Resort | Theatre | 40 |
| Lake Taupo | Motuoapa Lodge & Conference Centre | Theatre | 30 |
| Napier | Napier War Memorial Convention Centre | Theatre | 350 |

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|------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Auckland | New Zealand National Maritime Museum | Theatre | 350 |
| Auckland | Northridge Country Lodge | Theatre | 100 |
| Auckland | Novotel Ellerslie | Theatre | 280 |
| Location | Venue | Room Type | Capacity |
| Hamilton | Novotel Tainui Hamilton | Theatre | 350 |
| Wellington | Novotel Wellington | Theatre | 130 |
| Queenstown | Nugget Point Resort | Theatre | 80 |
| Mt Maunganui | Oceanside Motor Lodge & Twin Towers | Theatre | 80 |
| Rotorua | Okataina Lodge | Theatre | 70 |
| Wellington | Overseas Terminal Function Centre, The | Theatre | 1100 |
| Bay of Islands | Park Lodge on Paihia, The | Theatre | 150 |
| Queenstown | Parkroyal Queenstown | Theatre | 100 |
| Christchurch | Pavilions Hotel, The | Theatre | 60 |
| New Plymouth | Plymouth International Hotel | Theatre | 450 |
| Wellington | Portland Hotel of Thornden | Theatre | 200 |
| Mt Ruapehu | Powderhorn Chateau | Theatre | 80 |
| Dunedin | Quality Hotel Brydone | Theatre | 200 |
| Dunedin | Quality Hotel Dunedin | Theatre | 90 |
| Hamilton | Quality Hotel Hamilton | Theatre | 650 |
| Palmerston North | Quality Hotel Palmerston North | Theatre | 180 |
| Wellington | Queens Wharf Events Centre | Theatre | 1716 |
| Rotorua | River Lodge, The | Theatre | 60 |
| Auckland | River Mill | Theatre | 70 |
| Rotorua | Royal Lakeside Novotel Rotorua | Theatre | 400 |
| Christchurch | Russley Hotel, The | Theatre | 150 |
| Nelson | Rutherford Hotel Nelson | Theatre | 400 |
| Auckland | Rydges Auckland | Theatre | 270 |
| Christchurch | Rydges Christchurch | Theatre | 200 |
| Palmerston North | Rydges Hotel Palmerston North | Theatre | 200 |
| Rotorua | Rydges Rotorua | Theatre | 350 |
| Dunedin | Scenic Circle - Southern Cross | Theatre | 180 |
| West Coast | Shantytown | Theatre | 400 |
| Auckland | Sheraton Hotel & Towers Auckland | Theatre | 800 |
| Mt Ruapehu | Sir Edmund Hillary OPC | Theatre | 100 |
| Auckland | Sky City Hotel & Conference Centre | Theatre | 700 |
| Queenstown | Skyline Gondola, Restaurant & Luge | Theatre | 300 |
| Dunedin | Skyline Leisure Lodge | Theatre | 70 |
| Methven | Sovereign Resort Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Auckland | Spencer on Byron, The | Theatre | 550 |
| Auckland | Stamford Plaza Auckland | Theatre | 400 |
| Doubtless Bay | Taipa Bay Beach Resort | Theatre | 100 |
| Lake Taupo | Taupo Events Centre | Theatre | 1500 |
| Wellington | Te Papa - Museum of New Zealand | Theatre | 600 |
| Rotorua | Tiketere Springs Estate | Theatre | 120 |
| Nelson | Trailways Motor Inn | Theatre | 100 |
| Auckland | University of Auckland | Theatre | 432 |
| Hamilton | University of Waikato | Theatre | 394 |
| Auckland | Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre | Theatre | 420 |
| Lake Taupo | Wairakei Resort & Conference Centre | Theatre | 700 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------|------|
| Wellington | Wellington Convention Centre | Theatre | 2429 |
| Wellington | Wharekauhau Country Estate | Theatre | 30 |
| Kaikoura | White Morph Motor Inn | Theatre | 15 |
| Bay of Islands | Woodlands Conference Centre | Theatre | 40 |

Appendix II

PROPOSED INTERVIEW TOPICS

Ice Breaker/Background of the Interviewee

1. How long have you been in this industry?
2. How did you get into this industry?

Background of the Facility

1. When did your company establish a website?
2. Do you think your company needs a website?
3. What do you expect from your company's website?
4. What is your budget on creating and maintaining the website?
5. What is your company's experience in adopting ICT?

Feature

1. What feature do you think is important to a website?
2. What is your perception of an effective website?
3. Do you think your website is missing something?

Strategy

1. Why do you think your company needs a website?
2. Is the website part of your strategy?

3. Do you apply your website with any customer loyalty programmes?
4. Are you carrying out Internet promotions? E.g. Special rate for booking through Internet?

Community

1. Does your website have links to other tourism or hospitality companies as online partner or facilities of a same group?
2. Does your website have links to other information or companies in the community of the destination?
3. Why or why not?
4. Do you think ICT is being used to foster networks of local business? How?

Benefits/Drawbacks of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

1. How many enquiries do you obtain from your website?
2. How many sales was/is expected to generate from the website?
3. Do you save any money by adoption Internet marketing through reduced marketing expense in other channels?
4. Do you think that the establishment of the website is a good investment of time and money?
5. Do you design and maintain your website using in-house employees?
6. What benefits do you think ICT can contribute to your company? E.g. market your property, increase exposure, project a professional image, quickly impart information, expand customer base, etc.

Website Development Process

1. What is the management's attitude on using the ICT?
2. Who created the website?
3. What's your relationship with the website designer?
4. Do you think the website designer understands the facility and the company's strategy?
5. Do you consider the existing infrastructure of your local community sufficient to support the application of ICT?

Appendix III
MICE Properties with Websites (NZ), capacity of 300 pax or more

| Location | Venue | Room | Capacity |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Airport/ Manukau City | Centra Auckland Airport | Theatre | 400 |
| Airport/ Manukau City | Lakeside Convention Centre | Theatre | 1600 |
| Auckland | Auckland Showgrounds | Theatre | 3000 |
| Auckland | Bruce Mason Centre | Theatre | 950 |
| Auckland | Carlton Hotel Auckland | Theatre | 750 |
| Auckland | Crowne Plaza Auckland | Theatre | 500 |
| Auckland | Eden Park | Theatre | 1000 |
| Auckland | Hyatt Regency Auckland | Theatre | 450 |
| Auckland | New Zealand National Maritime Museum | Theatre | 350 |
| Auckland | Sheraton Hotel & Towers Auckland | Theatre | 800 |
| Auckland | Sky City Hotel & Conference Centre | Theatre | 700 |
| Auckland | Stamford Plaza Auckland | Theatre | 400 |
| Auckland | The Edge | Theatre | 2450 |
| Auckland | The Heritage Auckland | Theatre | 350 |
| Auckland | The Hilton Auckland | Theatre | 450 |
| Auckland | The Spencer on Byron | Theatre | 550 |
| Auckland | University of Auckland | Theatre | 432 |
| Auckland | Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre | Theatre | 420 |
| Bay of Islands | Copthorne Resort Bay of Islands | Theatre | 300 |
| Christchurch | Centra Christchurch | Theatre | 350 |
| Christchurch | Chateau on the Park | Theatre | 420 |
| Christchurch | Christchurch Convention Centre | Theatre | 2500 |
| Christchurch | Hotel Grand Chancellor Christchurch | Theatre | 1200 |
| Christchurch | Lincoln University | Theatre | 380 |
| Dunedin | Dunedin Centre, The | Theatre | 2700 |
| Hamilton | Novotel Tainui Hamilton | Theatre | 350 |
| Hamilton | Quality Hotel Hamilton | Theatre | 650 |
| Hamilton | University of Waikato | Theatre | 394 |
| Lake Taupo | Great Lake Centre | Theatre | 850 |
| Lake Taupo | Taupo Events Centre | Theatre | 1500 |
| Lake Taupo | Wairakei Resort & Conference Centre | Theatre | 700 |
| Napier | Napier War Memorial Convention Centre | Theatre | 350 |
| Nelson | Rutherford Hotel Nelson | Theatre | 400 |
| New Plymouth | Grand Central Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| New Plymouth | Plymouth International Hotel | Theatre | 450 |
| New Plymouth | The Devon Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Palmerston North | Massey University | Theatre | 495 |
| Queenstown | Skyline Gondola, Restaurant & Luge | Theatre | 300 |
| Rotorua | Centra Rotorua | Theatre | 300 |
| Rotorua | Lake Plaza Rotorua Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Rotorua | Millennium Rotorua | Theatre | 400 |
| Rotorua | Royal Lakeside Novotel Rotorua | Theatre | 400 |
| Rotorua | Rydges Rotorua | Theatre | 350 |
| Rotorua | The Dynasty Heritage Rotorua | Theatre | 500 |
| Tauranga | Baycourt | Theatre | 600 |
| Tauranga | Hotel Armitage | Theatre | 300 |
| Wellington | Brentwood Hotel | Theatre | 400 |
| Wellington | Queens Wharf Events Centre | Theatre | 1716 |
| Wellington | Te Papa - Museum of New Zealand | Theatre | 600 |
| Wellington | The Overseas Terminal Function Centre | Theatre | 1100 |
| Wellington | Wellington Convention Centre | Theatre | 2429 |
| West Coast | Shantytown | Theatre | 400 |
| Whangarei | Forum North Convention Centre | Theatre | 607 |

Appendix IV ICCA Congress, Convention and Exhibition Centres

| Property | URL |
|---|---|
| Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre | http://www.aecc.co.uk |
| Acapulco Convention Center | http://www.centro-acapulco.com.mx |
| Adelaide Convention Centre | http://www.adelaidecc.com.au |
| Ahoy' Exhibition, Congress & Event Centre | http://www.ahoy.nl |
| AIP/Lisboa Congress Centre | http://www.aip.pt |
| Amsterdam RAI | http://www.rai.nl |
| Anhembí Turismo e Eventos da Cidade de São Paulo | http://www.anhembí.com.br |
| Aros Congress Center | http://www.acc.se/ |
| Arusha International Conference Centre -AICC- | http://www.aicc.co.tz |
| Brighton Centre | http://www.brighton.co.uk |
| Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.bcec.com.au |
| Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre -BITEC- | http://www.bitec.net |
| Barbican Centre | http://www.barbican.org.uk |
| Beaulieu Congress & Exhibition Centre | http://www.beaulieu.org |
| Beijing International Convention Centre -BICC- | http://www.bicc.com.cn |
| Belfast Waterfront Hall | http://www.waterfront.co.uk |
| Bella Center A/S | http://www.bellacenter.dk |
| Austria Center Vienna | http://www.acv.at |
| Awaji Yumebutai International Conference Center | http://www.yumebutai.org |
| BEXCO (Busan Exhibition & Convention Centre) | http://www.bexco.co.kr |
| Athens Concert Hall Organisation | http://www.megaron.gr |
| Balai Sidang Jakarta Convention Center | http://www.jcc.co.id |
| Bali International Convention Centre | http://www.baliconvention.com |
| CNIT Conference & Exhibition Centre | http://www.parisexpo.com |
| COEX (Convention & Exhibition) | http://www.coex.co.kr |
| Brussels Expo | http://www.brusselsexpo.com |
| Bournemouth International Centre -BIC- | http://www.bic.co.uk |
| Catalonia Palace of Congresses | http://www.pcongresos.com |
| Cairns Convention Centre | http://www.cairnsconvention.com.au |
| Cairo International Convention & Exhibition Centre -CICC- | http://www.cicc.egnet.net |
| Canary Islands Convention Centre | http://www.pcongresos-canarias.com |
| Cancun Convention Centre | http://www.cancunconventioncenter.com |
| Cankarjev Dom Cultural & Congress Centre | http://www.cd-cc.si |
| Cannes Palais des Festivals et des Congrès | http://www.cannes.fr |
| Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) | http://www.capetownconvention.com |
| CCH - Congress Centrum Hamburg | http://www.cch.de |
| Central Hall - Westminster | http://www.c-h-w.com |
| Centro de Convenções Rebouças da Fundação Faculdade de Medicina | http://www.convencoesreboucas.com.br |
| Congress Casino Baden | http://www.ccb.at |
| Congress Centrum Saar GmbH/ Congresshalle/Saarlandhalle | http://www.ccsaar.de |
| Congress Innsbruck | http://www.congress-innsbruck.at |
| Christchurch Convention Centre / NCC (New Zealand) Ltd | http://www.convention.co.nz |

| Property | URL |
|---|---|
| Cité des Congrès Nantes-Atlantique | http://www.Congres-Nantes.fr |
| Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie Centre des Congres de la Villette | http://www.cite-sciences.fr |
| Congress Center Leipzig | http://www.ccl-leipzig.de |
| Congress Center Messe Frankfurt Messe Frankfurt GmbH | http://www.congresscenter.de |
| Congress Centrum Mainz GmbH | http://www.ccmainz.de |
| Convention Center Basel | http://www.congress.ch |
| Convention Centre Heidelberg | http://www.cvb-heidelberg.de |
| Concert & Congress Hall - Vatroslav Lisinski- | http://www.lisinski.hr |
| Concert and Congress Centre De Doelen | http://www.dedoelen.nl/index3.html |
| Conferences and Accommodation at the University of British Columbia | http://www.ubcconferences.com |
| Cultural Centre of Belém (CCB) | http://www.ccb.pt/ |
| Cyprus International Conference Centre | http://www.CICC.org.cy/ |
| Design Center Linz | http://www.design-center.at |
| Disneyland Resort Paris Business Solutions | http://www.dlpbusiness.com |
| Dubai International Convention Centre | http://www.dwtc.com |
| DuesseldorfCongress Veranstaltungsgesellschaft mbH | http://www.duesseldorfcongress.de |
| Earls Court and Olympia Group Ltd. | http://www.eco.co.uk |
| Grazer Congress, Convention Centre Graz | http://www.grazercongress.co.at |
| ExCeL | http://www.excel-london.co.uk |
| Edinburgh Conference Centre | http://www.eccscotland.com |
| Edinburgh First at the University of Edinburgh | http://www.EdinburghFirst.com |
| Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) | http://www.eicc.co.uk |
| Estrel Convention Center Berlin | http://www.estrel.com |
| Eurogress Aachen | http://www.eurogress-aachen.de |
| Europarque Congress Center | http://www.europarque.pt |
| Feria de Madrid Convention Centre -IFEMA- | http://www.ifema.es |
| Festival and Congress Center Bregenz | http://www.festspielhausbregenz.at |
| Harrogate International Centre | http://www.harrogateinternationalcentre.co.uk |
| Havana International Conference Center | http://www.complejopalco.com |
| Fiera Milano Congressi | http://www.fieramilanocongressi.it |
| Finlandia Hall | http://finlandia.hel.fi |
| First Business Centre Company | http://www.fbc.at |
| Golden Tulip Koningshof Conference Centre | http://www.goldentuliphotels.nl/gtkoningshof |
| Helsinki Fair Centre | http://www.finnexpo.fi |
| Hofburg Congress Center & Redoutensäle Vienna | http://www.hofburg.com |
| Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) | http://www.hkcec.com |
| Hotel City Club | http://www.eventcenter.at |
| ICM - International Congress Centre Munich | http://www.icm-muenchen.de |
| Grimaldi Forum Monaco | http://www.grimaldiforum.com |
| Halle Münsterland Congress Centre | http://www.messen-und-congresse.de |
| ICC Jerusalem International Convention Center | http://www.iccjer.co.il/ |
| ICC JEJU | http://www.iccjeju.co.kr |
| International Convention Centre Durban Pty. Ltd. -ICC Durban | http://www.icc.co.za |
| Irish International, Convention & Exhibition Centre Ltd. | http://www.rds.ie |

| Property | URL |
|---|---|
| Israel Trade Fairs & Conv. Center Ltd. | http://www.israel-trade-fairs.com |
| Istanbul Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.icec.org |
| International Conference & Exhibition Centre - Madeira Tecnopolo | http://www.madeiratecnopolo.pt |
| International Convention Centre -ICC- (Birmingham) | http://www.necgroup.co.uk |
| Karlsruher Messe- und Kongress GmbH (KMK) | http://www.karlsruhe-messe-kongress.de/ |
| Pacific Convention Plaza Yokohama | http://www.pacifico.co.jp |
| Municipal House of Prague | http://www.obecni-dum.cz |
| Music and Congress Centre Lübeck | http://www.muk.de/ |
| National Palace of Culture Congress Centre Sofia | http://www.ndk.bg |
| Marina Congress Center | http://www.marinacongresscenter.com |
| Massachusetts Convention Center Authority | http://www.mccahome.com |
| Mediterranean Conference Centre | http://www.mcc.com.mt |
| Kursaal Center | http://www.kursaal.org |
| Kyoto International Conference Hall | http://www.joho-kyoto.or.jp/KICH/index_e.html |
| Le Corum | http://corum-montpellier.fr |
| Lille Grand Palais | http://www.lillegp.com |
| Lingotto Conference Centre - Expo 2000 SpA | http://www.expo2000.it |
| Lyon - Palais des Congrès de Lyon | http://www.palais-des-congres.com |
| Maastricht Exhibition & Congress Centre (MECC) | http://www.mecc.nl |
| Madrid Congress Hall | http://www.pcm.tourspain.es |
| Maison de la Chimie Centre International des Congrès | http://www.maisondelachimie.com/ |
| Melbourne Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC) | http://www.mecc.com.au |
| Messe Berlin GmbH - ICC Berlin | http://www.icc-berlin.de |
| MINES Exhibition Management Sdn Bhd | http://www.miecc.mines.com.my |
| Montreux Convention Center Ltd | http://www.montreux.ch/congres |
| Manchester Conference Centre (UMIST) | http://www.meeting.co.uk |
| Manchester Int. Convention Centre | http://www.micc.uk.com |
| Mannheim Congress Centre (CCM) | http://www.congress-mannheim.de |
| Netherlands Congress Centre | http://www.congresscentre.com |
| Nice Acropolis Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.nice-acropolis.com |
| Palace of Culture & Science | http://www.pkin.pl |
| Palacio de Congresos de Barcelona | http://www.firabcn.com |
| Palacio de Exposiciones y Congressos Granada Congress Centre | http://www.pcgr.org |
| Municipal Congress Centre | http://www.munimadrid.es/camponaciones |
| Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.pcecwa.com.au |
| Nomiki Bibliothiki SA - Law Publishing Group & Professional Training Center | http://www.nb.org |
| Norway Trade Fairs - Norway Congress Centre | http://www.norwaycongress.com |
| Osnabrücker Veranstaltungs-und Kongress GmbH | http://www.stadthalle-osnabrueck.de |
| Paris-Nord Villepinte | http://www.expoparisnord.com |
| Pattaya Exhibition & Convention Hall (PEACH) | http://www.royalcliff.co.th |
| Philippine Int. Convention Centre -PICC- | http://www.piccmanila.com |
| Prague Congress Centre | http://www.kcp.cz |
| PSA Singapore Expo Pte Ltd. | http://www.singapore-expo.com.sg |
| Palais des Congrès de Bruxelles | http://www.palcobru.be |

| Property | URL |
|---|---|
| Palais des Congrès de Montréal | http://www.congresmtl.com |
| Palais des Congrès de Paris | http://www.palaisdescongres-paris.com |
| Palais des Congrès de Versailles | http://www.CongresVersailles.com |
| Palazzo della Cultura e dei Congressi Bologna / Bologna Congressi -S.P.A- | http://www.bolognacongressi.it |
| Palexpo / Orgexpo Geneva | http://www.palexpo.ch |
| Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre | http://www.secc.co.uk |
| Queen Sirikit National Convention Ctre NCC Management & Dev. Co. Ltd. | http://www.gsncc.co.th/ |
| Rio Convention & Exhibition Centre - RIOCENTRO | http://www.riocentro.com.br |
| Puebla Convention Centre (Centro de Convenciones Puebla) | http://www.convenciones-puebla.com.mx |
| Putra World Trade Centre | http://www.pwtc.com.my/pwtc |
| Quebec City Convention Centre | http://www.convention.qc.ca |
| Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre | http://www.qeicc.co.uk |
| Riva del Garda Congressi - Palacongressi Srl | http://www.palacongressi.it |
| Royal Dutch Jaarbeurs | http://www.jaarbeursutrecht.nl |
| Shanghai International Convention Centre Co., Ltd. | http://www.shicc.net |
| Stockholm International Fairs | http://www.stofair.se/ |
| Strasbourg Convention Centre | http://www.strasbourgmeeting.com |
| Stuttgart - Liederhalle Cultural & Congress Centre -KKL- | http://www.congress-stuttgart.de |
| Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.suntecsingapore.com |
| Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre | http://www.swefair.se |
| Sakala Centre Ltd. | http://www.sakala.ee |
| Salzburg Congress | http://www.salzburgcongress.at |
| San Diego Convention Center | http://www.sdccc.org |
| Sandton Convention Centre | http://www.saconvention.co.za |
| Sava Centar | http://www.savacentar.com |
| United Nations Conference Centre - Addis Ababa (UNCC-AA) | http://www.un.org/depts/eca/uncc-aa/ |
| Toulouse Congress Center | http://www.centre-congres-toulouse.fr |
| Stavanger Forum | http://www.stavanger-forum.no |
| Stockholm City Conference Centre | http://www.stoccc.se |
| Tokyo International Foundation / Tokyo International Forum | http://www.tif.or.jp |
| Taipei International Convention Centre -TICC- | http://www.cetra.org.tw |
| Tampere Hall | http://www.tampere-talo.fi/TampereHall |
| The Edge, Auckland Convention Centre | http://www.the-edge.co.nz |
| Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre | http://www.scec.com.au/ |
| Veranstaltungszentrum Westfalenhallen GmbH | http://www.westfalenhallen.de |
| Vienna Trade Shows & Congress | http://www.messe.at |
| World Trade Center Moscow | http://www.wtcmoscow.ru |
| World Trade Centre Curaçao | http://www.wtccuracao.com |
| Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona Foundation - APAC- | http://www.uabcampus.com |
| Valencia Conference Centre | http://www.palcongrec-vlc.com |
| Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre (VCEC) | http://www.vanconex.com |
| Warwick Conferences | http://www.warwickconferences.com |
| Washington Convention Center Authority | http://www.dcconvention.com/ |
| Zitelle Centro Culturale di Esposizione e Comunicazione | http://www.zitelle.it |

Appendix V ICCA Meeting Hotels List

| Country | City | Hotel |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Germany | Munich | ArabellaSheraton Grand Hotel |
| Greece | Attica | Astir Palace Resort |
| Netherlands Antilles | Willemstad | Avila Beach Hotel |
| Australia | Perth, WA | Burswood International Resort Casino |
| | Crete | Capsis Beach Resort Hotel |
| Venezuela | Caracas | Caracas Hilton Hotel |
| | Snekkersten | Comwell Helsinger |
| Belgium | Brussels | Conrad International Brussels |
| Turkey | Istanbul | Conrad International Istanbul |
| | Punta del Este | Conrad Resort & Casino Punta del Este |
| Argentina | Buenos Aires | Crowne Plaza Panamericano |
| | | Curacao Marriott Beach Resort & Emerald Casino |
| | | Elounda Beach Hotel & Elounda Bay Palace |
| | | Forum Hotel München |
| Malaysia | Kuala Lumpur | Genting & Awana Hotels & Resort Malaysia |
| Netherlands | Noordwijk aan Zee | Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin |
| Slovenia | Ljubljana | Grand Hotel Union |
| United Arab Emirates | Dubai | Grand Hyatt Dubai |
| Tunisia | Hammamet | Grand Palais des Congrès d'Hammamet |
| Mexico | Cancun | Hilton Cancun Beach & Golf Resort |
| | | Hilton Istanbul |
| United Kingdom | London | Hilton London Metropole Hotel & Conference Centre |
| | | Hilton Munich Park |
| | Sevilla | Hotel Alcora |
| | | Hotel Bayerischer Hof |
| | Benalmadena | Hotel Casino Torrequebrada |
| Russia | Moscow | Hotel Complex "Cosmos" |
| Croatia | Opatija | Hotel Excelsior |
| Spain | Barcelona | Hotel Fira Palace |
| Hungary | Budapest | Hotel Inter-Continental Budapest |
| Czech Republic | Prague | Hotel Inter-Continental Praha |
| | Vienna | Hotel Inter-Continental Wien |
| | Saint-Petersburg | Hotel Pribaltiyskaya |
| Portugal | Lisbon | Hotel Tivoli Lisboa |
| China | Shanghai | Hua Ting Hotels & Towers Shanghai |
| Austria | Telfs-Buchen | Interalpen-Hotel Tyrol |
| | Kos | Kipriotis Village |
| | Cheju | Lotte Hotel Cheju |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--|
| | Arona, Tenerife | Mare Nostrum Resort |
| Germany | Bonn | Maritim Bonn Hotel |
| | | Melia Cancun Beach & Spa Resort |
| | | Moon Palace Resorts |
| | Prague | Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts |
| | | Novotel London West |
| Singapore | Singapore | Pan Pacific Singapore |
| Canada | Vancouver | Pan Pacific Vancouver |
| Korea Republic | Busan | Paradise Hotel & Casino Busan |
| | | Pestana Carlton Palace Hotel |
| Ukraine | Kiev | President Hotel Kyivsky |
| Uruguay | Montevideo | Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza Hotel |
| | Hamburg | Radisson SAS Hotel Hamburg |
| Norway | Oslo | Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel Oslo |
| Denmark | Copenhagen | Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel |
| Hong Kong, China | Wanchai | Renaissance Harbour View Hotel |
| Japan | Osaka | Rihga Royal Hotel |
| | Seoul | Seoul Hilton Hotel |
| | | Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts |
| Qatar | Doha | Sheraton Doha Hotel & Resort |
| | | Sheraton Montevideo Hotel |
| | Vancouver | Sheraton Vancouver Wall Center Hotel |
| | Rhodes | Sofitel Capsis Hotel Rhodes |
| Thailand | Bangkok | Sofitel Central Plaza Bangkok |
| | | Swissôtel Istanbul, The Bosphorus |
| India | Bombay | The Taj Mahal Hotel Bombay |

Appendix VI

Links and Quality

| | Links | | | Language | Accuracy | User-friendliness | Currency |
|--|--|---|---|---------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Supporting | Business | Community | | | | |
| Abbey Lodge | | Qualmark, Sky TV, AA, MANZ | All about Dunedin | English | one link not working | No sub-headings or heading | |
| Beachcomber | | Jason's, web designer | | English | | | |
| Brentwood Hotel | | | | English | | side headings | |
| Contra Auckland Airport | | all hotels in same group. | | English | | Headings, Site Map | |
| Christchurch Convention Centre | www.macromedia.com | Wedding planner, Ticketek, Nzsite, Film South, Christchurch & Canterbury marketing | Christchurch city | English | | side headings | |
| Cophorne Queenstown Lakefront | | all hotels in same group, BIZ Trav, Avis, Air NZ, Olympic NZ. | | Japanese, English | | Headings | last update Nov 14 |
| Cotsold Hotel | | PGA Australian Gold Tournament, all hotels in same group | www.aucklandnz.com, www.waikatoz.co.nz, www.rotorua.co.nz, Napier & Hawkes Bay, West Coast, Christchurch... and other nz destinations | English | | side headings | |
| Edgewater Resort | | NZ sites.com, nz tourism online, Qualmark, web designer. | Iyfish hunt, Treble Cone ski area, Cadrona Alpine resort | Japanese, English | | | |
| Forum North Convention Centre | | ticketek, wedding planner | rose garden, clock museum. | English | | side headings | |
| Heritage Queenstown | | all hotels in same group, Cathay Pacific, Jason New Zealand | purenz.com, Children Charity, children literature, Winter Momentium (South Island guide) | English | | side headings | |
| Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland Airport | | Wise's Maps, Tourism NZ, Tourism Auckland, CINZ, NZ Accommodation & Travel Guide, hotels in same group | | English | wrong URL listed in CINZ | | |
| Lake Plaza Rotorua Hotel | | Amex, web designer | Rotorua | English | | side headings | |
| Napier War Memorial Conference Centre | www.acrobatreader.com | TSL Ltd & TSL, venues, CINZ, EVANZ, Ad Plus Advertising | hawke's Bay Tourism, Marineland, Kennedy Park Holiday Campsite | English | | no rollover menu but local links within site | |
| Novotel Tainui Hamilton | | all hotels in same group and related businesses | | Dutch, English, French | | confusing | |
| Overseas Terminal function Centre | | Actrix(web designer) | | English | | side headings | events listed till June 2002 only |
| River Mill | | | | English | | simple | |
| Rydges Christchurch | www.macromedia.com | all hotels in same group, related business in same group. | | English | | | package valid till last Dec |
| Shantytown | www.quicktime.com, www.acrobatreader.com, www.medialpage.com, www.macromedia.com | web designer, nzlive.com, NZ Info, Network, ukzra...hotels, tour.co. etc. | Tourism West Coast, eco-rafting, Museum, Greymouth seaside top holiday park, The ghosttown webting | English | | options for video | |
| The Spencer on Byron | | Castle Resorts & Hotels, travel partners: aloha airlines, Hawaiian airlines, JAL, Budget, Dollar Rental car. | | English | | | |
| Wellington Convention Centre | www.quicktime.com, www.acrobatreader.com | Festival Singers, NZSO, NZTB, Budget, Corporate Cabs (tw), Wellingtonz.com, On-line Art Gallery, Holliuk, Wedding Consultants | What's on Wellington | English | | options on presentation: QuickTime, PPT or PDF | Update everyday |
| Arabella Sheraton Grand Hotel, Munich | | Starwood Group, Vicinity (Web designer) | | English (German) | Listed German site, English site has to be search thru google | Confused with corporate site | |
| Cairo International Convention & Exhibition Centre | | | | English | Communication, transportation (page not found) | side headings | info expired one week |
| Congress Centre Messe Frankfurt | www.acrobatreader.com | Mess Frankfurt GmbH, AIRC, ICCA, GCB, SevenCenters, KongressKoperation, Avis, Train, Infogate (airlines) | | English, German | | | |
| Hilton London Metropole | | Hilton, Open World (Web design) | | English | | side headings | |
| International Convention Center Jeju | free email: hotmail, yahoo & lycos | 11 PCOs, 4 Magazines, Korean Air, Asiana Airlines, AVIS rental car, Tour Guides: Licenses, Choju Info Network, Currency exchange | Joju Province, Jeju City, Seogwipo City, Bukjeju county, Namjeju county. | English, Japanese, Korean | | | |
| Mediterranean Conference Centre | | 27 Destination Mgmt Cos (13 w/ email only), Island Caterer, Air Malta, i4-us Studios (web designer), Historic Conference Centre of Europe | | | links to ICCA not found | | |
| Palais de congres de Montreal | | | Tourisme Montreal | English, French | Tourisme Montreal (page not found) | | last update: Dec 6 2002 |
| Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo | | Radisson, SAS, Rezidor Hospitality | 10 area attraction links, 6 location info links | English | | side headings | |
| Stockholm International Fair | | Fairlink.se, www.silverize.com (VR picture), Stockholm Conventiljon Bureau, Congress Stockholm, www.stofair.se/travel/, Massresor Travel Agency | www.stofair.se, www.stockholm.se | English, Swedish | links to fairlink (page not found) | | |
| The National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham | www.macromedia.com, IPIX plug-in, www.acrobatreader.com | All advertised business, box office, airports, CBSO, Birmingham Arts Marketing, Assn of British Orchestras, other venues of the group, all exhibition suppliers | Birmingham official site, places to stay, restaurants, sports & leisure, lifestyle, business service | English | | side headings | Update everyday |

Appendix VIII

Distribution Testing Results

| | Search Engines | | Specialist Index | | | Association | | |
|--|----------------|--------|--|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | Yahoo | Google | Destination Site | Professional | Agents | Affiliation | Convention Assn | Assn |
| Abbey Lodge (Hotel/Motel) | Y | Y | www.purenz.com, www.cityofdunedin.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | HANZ |
| Beachcomber Motor Inn | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | www.nz-travel.co.nz, www.jason.co.nz | | NZCA | MANZ |
| Brentwood Hotel | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Centra Auckland Airport | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | Accor Group | NZCA | |
| Christchurch Convention Centre | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz, www.icca.nl | | | NZCA | |
| Copthorne Queenstown Lakefront | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | www.biztrav.co.nz | Copthorne, Millennium, Novotel | NZCA | |
| Cotsworld Hotel | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Edgewater Resort | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | www.tourism.net.nz | | NZCA | |
| Forum North Convention Centre | * | * | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Heritage Queenstown | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | Heritage, City Life | NZCA | |
| Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland Airport | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | Grand Chancellor | NZCA | |
| Lake Plaza Rotorua Hotel | Y | Y | www.purenz.com, www.rotoruanz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Napier War Memorial Conference Centre | Y | Y | www.hawkesbaytourism.co.nz | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | TSL venues | NZCA | EVANZ |
| Novotel Tainui Hamilton | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | www.biztrav.co.nz | Copthorne, Millennium, Novotel | NZCA | |
| Overseas Terminal function Centre | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| River Mill | Y | Y | | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Rydges Christchurch | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | Rydges Hotels Resorts, AHL | NZCA | |
| Shantytown | Y | Y | www.purenz.com, www.west-coast.co.nz | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | www.jason.co.nz | | NZCA | |
| The Spencer on Byron | Y | Y | www.purenz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | Castle Resort & Hotel | NZCA | |
| Wellington Convention Centre | Y | Y | www.purenz.com, www.wellingtonnz.com | www.conventionsnz.co.nz | | | NZCA | |
| Arabellasheraton Grand Hotel, Munich | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | Starwood | | |
| Cairo International Convention & Exhibition Centre | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | | | |
| Congress Centre Messe Frankfurt | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | | KongressKoperation | |
| Hilton London Metropole | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | Hilton | | |
| International Convention Center Jeju | Y | Y | www.namjeju.kr | www.icca.nl | | | | |
| Mediterranean Conference Centre | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | | | |
| Palais de congres de Montreal | Y | Y | www.tourism-montreal.org | www.icca.nl | | | | |
| Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo | Y | Y | | www.icca.nl | | Radisson | | |
| Stockholm International Fair | Y | Y | www.stoinfo.se | www.icca.nl | | | Congress Stockholm | |
| The National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham | Y | Y | www.birmingham.org.uk | www.icca.nl | | NEC Group | | |

