

# DESIGNS MATTER: Delivering Information Sources for Tourism

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**Abstract** - *Tourism has benefits not just for travelers, but also to the local economy. Since, Bicol Region has natural and cultural attractions; it is a potential travel destination in the country. Technology in delivering information sources played vital role for the success of the tourism industry in the Region. This allows travel enthusiasts to get more information about various tourist attractions. This paper analyzes the effectiveness of delivering information sources such as web advertisement and desktop publishing for tourist promotion in the Bicol Region. Specifically, it determined the status of tourism, and identified common forms of promotions for tourism development. The study adopted mixed method of research. This method was utilized to confirm and validate findings. Interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data from the respondents of the selected Local Government Units, Department of Tourism, Travel Agencies and Hotel Agents in the Region. Based on the findings, of the total foreign visitors in the country, only 9.14% visited Bicol Region in 2014. That is why, domestic tourist showed high percentage against foreign visitors with 25.7%. Brochures with EZ maps as most commonly used desktop publishing materials and websites and social media for web advertisement. Thus, there is a need to reevaluate promotional activities by the DOT and other agencies. Adoption suggestive features for creative desktop publishing materials and web services should be considered to increase tourist visitors in the Region.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, promotion, desktop publishing, web, travel destination*

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is another source of income for Bicol Region. One of the government agencies important to the success of tourist promotion is that of Local Government Units (LGUs). These LGUs play major role in community development, address community's problems and concerns, enforce policies, hold influence over their communities, and provide the links between the people and government, [1]. Provincial LGUs have the capacity to deliver sources of information from the different tourist destinations in the region to the different parts of the world. Technology shows a primary role in tourist promotion. It allows people to get more information about various tourist destinations and cultures. Its natural and cultural attractions of Bicol can be potential travel destinations in the country. Among the more popular sites are the gentle "butanding" whale sharks of Donsol, the "perfect cone" Mayon Volcano of Albay, the popular Cam Sur Watersports Complex (CWC) in Camarines Sur and other amazing and pristine tourist destinations. There are also a lot of fiestas and festivals in the Bicol Region happening in

the year, most fiestas and festivals in the region are religious in origin and Filipino hospitality is more evident at festival time. These beautiful nature, culture and preserved traditions seek to boost tourism, expand business and provide livelihood opportunities that have positive impact to the tourism industry and to the local economy.

The source of information about a specific destination is an important means of promotion for the tourism industry [2]. The sources of information for various tourist destinations like desktop publishing (brochures, flyers, and the like) and web advertisement (websites, social media and the like) play its vital role on the success in the Region's tourism.

Recent reviews indicate that as the tourism industry matures it becomes smarter, more adaptable, and takes its own trajectory by departing from the institutional norms of non-tourism organizations in the community [3]. Thus, tourism can be an option for the region's present economy because foreign arrivals are increasing. It is not just from its pristine tourist

destinations, LGUs could also be permanently sustained income-generating community-based cultural programs by means of institutionalization of cultural funding [4]. It is a way of promoting tourism in some parts of the world. Moreover, potential travellers have limited knowledge about the attributes of a destination which they have not previously visited [5]. For this reason, information sources like desktop publishing materials and web services in tourist destinations are likely to be the representations of what that place has to offer. With some deals and discounts coming from hotels, travel agencies and airline companies and on most cases which leads to a form of marketing. However, local governance structures, power relations, and stakeholder linkages that include processes on planning and tourism [6] should be regarded of it.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This paper analyzes the effectiveness of delivering information sources for tourist promotion in the Bicol Region. Specifically, it: a) determines the status of tourism in terms of promotion; b) identifies common forms of delivering information sources; and c) analyzed their effectiveness for tourist promotion. This can provide as an opportunity to get, keep attention and allow travel enthusiasts to get more information about various tourist attractions.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study adopted descriptive-evaluative design of mixed methods of research [7]. Two different methods were utilized to confirm, validate or corroborate findings in analyzing the status of tourism promotion and the effectiveness of delivering information sources such as web advertisement and desktop publishing as tourist promotion in the Region for the year 2014-2015.

**Study Area.** “Bicolandia” is made up of the provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes and Masbate. Since, Bicol is one of the Philippines’ best-known tourist destinations; this will give benefits not only to the big investors but also the community dwellers where the tourist spots are located. This provides more opportunities for employment and business ventures. The Cam Sur Watersports Complex (CWC) which attracts groups of water sports enthusiasts from all over the world and Caramoan National Park are found in the Province of Camarines Sur. That is why

Camarines Sur has gained the biggest domestic and foreign arrivals. Naga City and Legazpi City has gained 2nd and 3rd place for hosting numerous visitors of the most beautiful places in the neighboring provinces. A home of majestic structure of Mayon Volcano in Albay got 7.8% with 77,895 visitors. This was followed by Catanduanes, Masbate City and Camarines Norte where its eastern part of it has unspoiled beach- the Calaguas Island which has clear blue waters and white sand Sorsogon City and Masbate, the ranch capital in the country and Iriga City the City of Crystal Clear Springs got the lowest tourist visitors [8].

**Population and Data Collection.** The data and information of this study was generated from the responses of the selected 96 domestic tourists and 33 foreign tourists in Bicol Region through the use of convenient sampling. The data and information were collected using a questionnaire-checklist to the 129 domestic and foreign tourists during their actual visits to the selected tourist spots in Bicol Region. The data and information were collected using a questionnaire-checklist to the domestic and foreign tourists. The questionnaire was composed of two parts the first part was the profile of the respondents and the second part were the series of questions aimed to determine the status of tourism and problems encountered in terms of promotion; identify common forms of delivering information sources; and analyze their effectiveness for tourist promotion.

A qualitative method was utilized on data gathered through Interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with selected Provincial and City LGUs, DOT focal persons, travel agencies and hotels agents. These were conducted concurrently to validate quantitative results used as bases for generalization of research outcomes; hence, mixed method of data collection was obtained. The review of related documents was also considered. Data gathered were statistically interpreted using frequency and percentage. They were analyzed and presented in graph and tabular form.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Status of Tourist Promotion in the Region**

Bicol is a best-known tourist destination in the country. This region can be a right place for adventurers, because of its volcanoes, beaches, caves, lakes and parks. It is also rich in culture evident the different festivals year round. That is why the tourism

industry can be the region's best pursuit for economic growth. Moreover, employment opportunities in the tourism industry [9] are catered to residents within the vicinity. Hence, it is not only LGUs and the service industries (transportation and hospitality services and entertainment venues) which will benefit from it, but also the community as a whole. Since, the market size of the tourism industry expands from the increase in the number of visitors.

Delivering information sources in tourism industry suggest an important role in the promotion and marketing of destinations. The Provincial and City LGUs in the Region have all the control of all promotional activities in their respective localities, hosting cultural activities, manufacturing the brochures, leaflets and foster to promote the place. Likewise, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) are the two agencies that support the activities of the LGUs in tourism promotion. It is done by hosting and recommending representatives to the different trainings and seminars to the tourism focal persons, and recommending representatives to attend tourism expo. While DTI helps the local LGUs and native products manufacturers in promotions.

Results of interviews reflected the reasons why foreign tourists chose the Region for a visit, it is either exploring the area, discovering its culture, to relax and do business. According to them, they are also entertained by friendly people and great food. And still, word of mouth is more effective than other types of marketing [10]. Since, there are a lot of Bicolanos who worked and have relatives in other countries, this can have actively influenced or encouraged more tourists to visit the place. Americans contributed to the biggest arrivals in Bicol in 2014 with 104, 961 visitors for a share of 35.1% to the total foreign tourist arrivals[11].

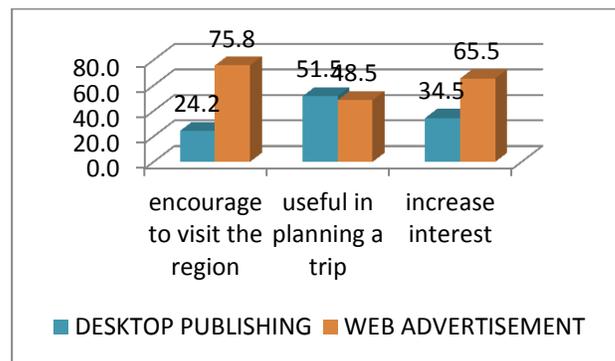
Tourists' destination is dynamic and continuously evolving, of particular importance are the impressions made upon arrival and departure, as they are powerful determinants of post-trip images [12]. It is unfortunate, of the total international tourist visited the country in 2014 for the figure of 3,267,542 only 298,827 or 9.14% visited Bicol Region in 2014 [13].

*Problems in Bicol Tourism.* Based from the interviews and FGDs, it showed that there are many problems in tourism industry that need to be resolved: of a) information dissemination, b) 3 A's of Tourism (access amenities and ancillaries), and c) Fund

Sources and Supports of Other Agencies d) Strategies in delivering information sources. The delayed and cancellation of flight/travels without further notice from the management is one of the problems encountered by the tourists who visited in the region. Since, transportation plays an important role in the travel experience of a tourist, delays and cancellations which lead to waste of time and energy can affect their post-travel evaluation. Although the airlines companies are not in control of some of the hitches like climate change or weather conditions but at least the passengers should be informed ahead of time. Few agencies for both private and public were actively participating tourism promotion activities. Accommodation services of tourist destinations in Bicol are only open during peak seasons and decent Hotel accommodations in Bicol are much expensive than other Asian countries.

The scenic spots and culture are not just some of the things that would add to the success of tourism industry but most importantly it is the visitors' enjoyment of the visit. That is why, travel agencies, airline companies, hotel owners and LGUs in the region should consider ways to attract tourists by their collaborative efforts in the active involvement in tourism promotion. Moreover, tourist time is valuable, most likely finest accommodation be provided by hotels/hostel/inns in the cities nearby or within the popular tourist destinations in the Region. Facilities from the service industries also should competitive with both national and international market.

### Delivering Information Sources



**Figure1.** Common forms of delivering information sources for tourism.

*Common Forms.* Social media are increasingly relevant as part of tourism practices affecting

destinations and businesses [14] and are playing an increasingly important role as information sources for travellers. The extent to which social media appear in search engine results in the context of travel-related searches [15]. Thus, the power of internet and social media in promoting tourism has great impact to the region’s tourism industry. As shown in figure 1, among 129 tourist, 75.8% agreed that web advertisement, “encourages to visit the region” ; “increases interest of visitors “ with 65.5% in contrast with desktop publishing with 24.2% and 34.5% respectively

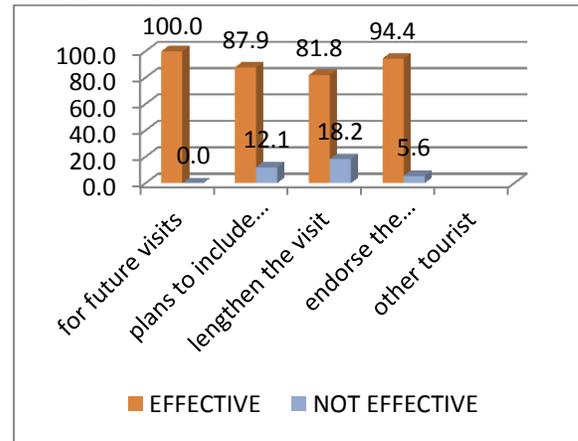
It is normal for some foreign or local tourists to use the internet search engine for travel planning. It is done by just entering in the search engine, keywords on the information about destinations. This was further validated during the interview. Because of wide range of coverage to interact with the web through phones, tablets, TVs, and other gadgets, websites and applications are much accessible to people compared to desktop publishing because people can easily navigate the place, book hotels and even interact with the web. However, desktop publishing was found useful in planning a trip compared to web advertisement. The region has an on-line promotion to actively promote emerging tourist destinations, the nagax.com, and other sites. This confirms the growing importance of online tourist promotion and has been significant in the region’s tourism industry. Nevertheless, these innovations and sudden change in technology may provide challenge not only for the tourism planners but also for tourism industry as a whole.

*Common Forms for Desktop Publishing Web and Advertisement.* Table 3 shows the summary results of delivering information sources for tourism and the other strategies made by tourism industry in Bicol Region. This was done using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews with LGU’s travel agencies, printing industries and Department of

**Table 3. Common Forms for Desktop Publishing Web and Advertisement**

Desktop Publishing	Web Advertisement
Brochures with EZ maps	Websites
Flyers	Social Networking
EZ maps	(Facebook, Twitter, And
Posters/Tarpaulin	Others)
Billboard	

It was found out that “brochures” and “websites” are the commonly used forms of promotion in Bicol. Every Provincial Local Government Unit (LGUs) produces their own brochures with EZ map in promoting tourist destinations like beaches, wildlife parks and others. Posters/Tarpaulin, leaflets, billboards and other forms are also used by some tourism agencies, depending on the demand of the events and activities. Other strategies made by the Provincial LGUs were travel packages, travel tour expo, tourism fairs, summits, television ads, radio ads, hosting conferences and competitive activities. It was found effective in promoting the Region. But according to some respondents, still the unpaid form of tourist promotion and one of the most credible forms of advertising is the word-of-mouth since a person puts their reputation every time they make a recommendation.



**Figure 2.** Delivering information sources in Bicol Region extent of effectiveness.

**Extent of Effectiveness**

The use of online sources of information to assist in the travel planning process is now well entrenched with prospective travellers [16]. Shown in figure 2 are the results of the extent of effectiveness of the different delivering information sources in Bicol Region (web advertisement and desktop publishing) for tourist promotions. They are ” Effective” for tourists’ future visits (100%); delivering information sources in the region are “effective” for their plans to include the region in their visits (87.9%); lengthen their visits (81.8%); and endorse the region to other tourist (94.4%). It maybe because, search engines likely direct travellers to social media sites and has its growing importance in the tourism domain [17]. The results imply that, web promotional activities have

been significant in the region’s tourism industry. Fascinating attractions and culture have impact in increasing foreign arrivals in the region and making it a tourist hotspot in the Philippines. It is given that the web advertisement can effectively influence travellers than any other traditional forms of tourism promotional activities. Ultimately, web advertisement has positive impacts and potential to influence the tourists’ decisions on visiting the region.

**Proposed creative delivering information sources**

**Title: CREATIVITY BEHIND TECHNOLOGY: An Innovative Delivering Information Sources For Tourist Promotion**

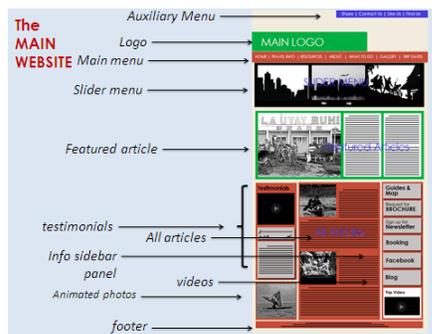
**Rationale:**

Majority of modern tourism websites have the same features, tourism implementation and promotion but then there are certain trends that have become so mainstream. Deliveries of websites and desktop publishing will vary based on the classifications of tourist from unconventional designs and layouts to full-featured user-friendly sites. This proposed website, entitled, CREATIVITY BEHIND TECHNOLOGY: An Innovative Delivering Information Sources for Tourist Promotion is an interconnected webpage that has features which allows user to navigate freely in the site and the clicked-interest or pages that stored for future sending of tailored-cut newsletter on his email are promotional factors which give positive impact to the tourism industry in Bicol.

**Objectives:**

Provide opportunities to increase tourist visitors in the Region, specifically, it will be able to:

- a. Address the issue of tourism industry;
- b. Lengthen tourist visits in the region; and
- c. Endorse the region to other tourists.



**Template 1.** Multi-site Structures and Navigation

**Table 4.** Special Features for Creativity Behind Technology Website

Features	Description
Main Menu	A top bar which consists a group of major options available in the website
Main Logo	Recognizable and distinctive information in a form of either pure graphics or composed of the name of the organization in a stylized way or interpreted with a unique symbol
Auxiliary Menu	An optional menu consisting links for SHARE, CONTACT US, LIKE USA, and FIND US
Banner	Clickable graphical advertisement linked to an assigned page describing and discussing an event or story called article. These crawling images may be in a form of taken shots or graphics which symbolize the article
Featured Article	A Special report or discussion of a person, event, an aspect of a major event, or the like, putting an emphasis and special interest commentary abounding with details that makes for pleasurable reading.
Testimonials	These are contents contributed by former clients for sharing their experiences they had during the event. Testimonials may be in a form of video, audio, and posted text messages.
All Articles	Compilation of various web documents written for a purpose of defining and describing a certain event. Aside its text, these may also consists of other web contents such as images, videos and audio recordings.
Information Side Bar Panel	Clickable buttons consisting links to Guides and Map, Request for Brochure, Sign-up for Newsletter, Booking, Facebook, and Blog.
Videos	Randomized links from various trip videos.
Animated Photos	Randomized images from taken photos from various events, places, activities, and the like.
Footer	A small section at the bottom of the page often used to display company data or copyright information

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings, of the total foreign visitors in the country, only 9.14% visited Bicol Region. Camarines Sur as famous tourist destination in the Region Brochures with maps as most commonly used desktop publishing materials; and social media for

web advertisement. Web advertisement was used to encourage tourists to visit the region while desktop publishing is useful in planning a trip. Moreover, web advertisement and desktop publishing are effective in tourist promotion. Thus, it may be recommended that the region's tourism development policies should be revisited for an effective sustainable tourism program. A developed coordinated tourism strategy should be strengthened that identifies the key priorities within the region. There should have an adequate funding support for an internationally competitive tourism promotion, and adoption of a creative delivery of information sources for tourist promotion should also be considered to increase tourist visitors in the region.

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