

7 Tourism and technology: From fax to the ambient and artificial intelligence era

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When reading this chapter, you will engage with these key concepts:

- Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) research evolution.
- Technology impacts tourism distribution and destination management.
- Eras of eTourism and how they revolutionised and reengineered the tourism industry.
- ICTs in tourism focus on automating processes and Smart Tourism.
- How Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs) and Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) revolutionised airline and hotel distribution.
- How the internet enabled websites transactions and online booking platforms.
- Web 2.0 and social media supported user-generated content and engagement.
- Smart tourism and big data integration further transform the tourism industry.
- Artificial Intelligence and metaverse introduce new opportunities and challenges.

Introduction

Tourism as a global activity transports travellers to tourism destinations, products and experiences. Over the years, an entire tourism and hospitality industry and ecosystem emerged to support the people who want to travel. This required intensive information exchange and communications to support marketing, business partnerships, reservations, capacity and inventory management, logistics and operational management, payments, banking and commissions.

Having joined the industry in the early 80s, it immediately became obvious to me that information and data exchange were the backbone of the entire