

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNET AS  
A MARKETING TOOL IN TOURISM

by

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR SUBMISSION OF A THESIS

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## ABSTRACT

With the ever-increasing number of people accessing the Internet and the recent explosion of e-commerce world wide, there are considerable implications for the tourism industry. Tourism suppliers are investing in the Internet via web pages, advertising and e-commerce, but what role does the Internet actually play in tourism? Before more money is placed into this new 'e-economy', it is important to study the effectiveness of the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism.

In order to better address the concerns described above, this research accomplishes several tasks. First, the significance of researching Internet use within the tourism context is established. Specifically, theories and concepts from postmodernism, post-industrialism and post-structuralism are drawn upon as they frame this study. Second, this research explores motivation and decision making within tourism and how the Internet is used during stages of travel preparation, planning and activities. Third, this research explores tourist preferences for novelty and familiarity in three dimensions; travel services, social contact and destination choices, and examines how these are associated with Internet use. The general structure of tourism markets in relation to Internet use as well as novelty and familiarity preferences are also discussed. Three case studies are undertaken to examine these matters: winter tourists, summer tourists and cruise tourists. Novelty-seekers were found to be the most frequent group of Internet users, and also were the most likely to consult a wider variety of information sources when making travel-related decisions. Results also indicate that Internet use for travel varies according to seasonality and destination choices rather than primary activity.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	v
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter 1 .....	1
Introduction .....	1
1.1 Framing the Case.....	1
1.2 Research Goal and Objectives .....	3
1.2.1 Guiding Questions .....	3
1.2.2 Significance of the Research .....	5
1.3 Dissertation Outline.....	6
Chapter 2.....	7
Setting the Context .....	7
2.1 Realms of Thought.....	7
2.2 Postmodern Marketing .....	7
2.3 Post-Industrial Economics.....	12
2.4 The Internet – A Post-Structuralist Language.....	14
2.5 Supply and Demand Relationships.....	17
2.5.1 The Supply .....	17
2.5.2 The Demand .....	23
2.5.3 The Motivation .....	24
2.5.4 Novelty-Seeking .....	29
2.6 Decision Making.....	31
2.7 Information and Image Formation.....	33
Chapter 3.....	37
Research Approach and Methods .....	37
3.1 The Paradigm Dialogue .....	37
3.2 Parameters of the study .....	40
3.2.1 Delimitations .....	41

3.3 Methods .....	41
3.3.1 Web Site Analysis .....	42
3.3.2 Interviews .....	43
3.3.3 Surveys .....	44
3.3.4 Construct Validity for the ITR Scale.....	47
3.3.5 Comparing Supply and Demand .....	48
Chapter 4.....	49
Banff Winter Tourists .....	49
4.0 Case Introduction.....	49
4.1 Suppliers .....	51
4.2 Tourist Respondent Characteristics .....	52
4.3 ITR Scale.....	58
4.4 Information Sources.....	64
4.5 Stages of Travel.....	68
4.6 Case Summary.....	71
Chapter 5.....	73
Banff Summer Tourists .....	73
5.0 Case Introduction.....	73
5.1 Suppliers.....	74
5.2 Respondent's Characteristics.....	76
5.3 ITR Scale .....	81
5.4 Information Sources.....	86
5.5 Stages of Travel.....	90
5.6 Case Summary.....	92
Chapter 6.....	94
Cruise Tourists.....	94
6.0 Case Introduction.....	94
6.1 Suppliers .....	94
6.2 Respondent Characteristics .....	95
6.3 ITR Scale.....	100
6. 4 Information Sources.....	105
6.5 Stages of Travel.....	109

6.6 Case Summary.....	112
Chapter 7.....	114
Case Comparisons .....	114
7.1 Suppliers.....	114
7.2 Tourist Respondents .....	116
7.3 ITR Scale .....	122
7.4 Information Sources.....	126
7.5 Stages of Travel.....	129
7.6 Summary.....	131
Chapter 8.....	133
Discussion and Implications .....	133
8.1 Introduction.....	133
8.2 Interpretation of Results and Relation to Literature-Based Research Ideas.....	134
8.2.1 Supply .....	137
8.2.2 Defining demand .....	139
8.2.3 Novelty-seeking.....	141
8.2.4 Decision-making .....	142
8.2.5 Image formation .....	143
8.2.6 Information sources.....	145
8.3.1 Research Implications .....	146
8.3.2 Future Research Directions .....	149
8.4 Conclusion.....	151
Appendix A.....	152
Interview Structure.....	152
Appendix B.....	153
Survey Instrument .....	153
References .....	159

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.1 Simple Use of the Internet.....	2
Figure 1.2 Complex Flow of Potential Internet Use .....	2
Table 2.1 Internet Uses for Tourism Suppliers.....	18
Table 2.2 Areas of Internet and Tourism Research .....	19
Table 2.3 Marketing Research Benefits to Tourism .....	22
Table 2.4 Maslow’s Heirarchy of Needs.....	25
Table 2.5 Approaches to Researching Motivation in Tourism .....	26
Table 2.6 Five Principle Phases of the Decision-Making Process.....	32
Figure 3.0 Conceptual Framework.....	39
Table 3.1 Survey Locations.....	45
Figure 4.0 Banff National Park Map .....	50
Table 4.1 Supplier’s Internet objectives/success determinants.....	52
Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics of winter Banff sample .....	53
Table 4.3 Scaled responses of Internet use .....	54
Table 4.4 Internet use responses via Yes/No .....	55
Table 4.5 Type of travel purchases made in past .....	56
Table 4.6 Banff winter ITR responses .....	57
Table 4.7 Rotated component matrix .....	58
Table 4.8 Pattern matrix of the 3-factor solution .....	59
Table 4.9 Banff summer ITR item frequency scores.....	62
Table 4.10 Which information sources do you currently use when planning a trip? .....	65
Table 4.11 Which is the most important information source to you? .....	65
Table 4.12 Which is the least important information source to you? .....	66
Table 4.13 Travel services dimension .....	67
Table 4.14 Social contact dimension .....	67
Table 4.15 Destination dimension .....	67



Table 4.16	Importance of information on the Internet at various stages of travel.....	69
Table 5.1	Supplier's Internet objectives/success determinants .....	75
Figure 5.1	Banff summer survey locations .....	77
Table 5.2	Demographic characteristics of summer Banff sample.....	78
Table 5.3	Scaled responses of Internet use.....	79
Table 5.4	Internet use responses via Yes/No .....	80
Table 5.5	Type of travel purchases made in past .....	80
Table 5.6	Banff summer ITR responses .....	82
Table 5.7	Rotated Component Matrix.....	83
Figure 5.2	Correlation and grouping of ITR survey questions .....	84
Table 5.8	ITR item frequency scores .....	85
Table 5.9	Which information sources do you currently use when planning a trip?.....	86
Table 5.10	Which is the most important information source to you? .....	87
Table 5.11	Which is the least important information source to you? .....	88
Table 5.12	Travel Services Dimension.....	89
Table 5.13	Social Contact Dimension.....	89
Table 5.14	Destination Dimension .....	89
Table 5.15	Importance of Information on the Internet at Various Stages of Travel.....	91
Table 6.1	Demographic characteristics of cruise tourists.....	97
Table 6.2	Scaled responses of Internet use among cruise tourists.....	98
Table 6.3	Internet use responses via Yes/No among cruise tourists .....	99
Table 6.4	Type of Travel Purchases Made in Past .....	100
Table 6.5	Cruise ITR responses.....	101
Table 6.6	Rotated Component Matrix .....	102
Table 6.7	ITR Item Frequency Scores.....	104
Table 6.8	Which information sources do you currently use when planning a trip? .....	105
Table 6.9	Which is the most important information source to you? .....	106
Table 6.10	Which is the least important information source to you? .....	106
Table 6.11	Travel Services Dimension .....	107

Table 6.12	Social Contact Dimension.....	107
Table 6.13	Destination Dimension.....	107
Table 6.14	Importance of Information on the Internet at Various Stages of Travel .....	110
Table 7.1	Supplier’s Internet Objectives/Success Determinants .....	115
Table 7.2	Demographic characteristics comparison of complete study .....	118
Figure 7.1	Group comparison of on-line travel purchases .....	120
Figure 7.2	Average ITR score comparison between cases and dimensions.....	123
Table 7.3	ITR Scores comparison by case .....	124
Figure 7.3	ITR comparison of on-line travel product purchases.....	125
Table 7.4	Number of information sources used among ITR groups.....	127
Table 7.5	Most important information source comparisons .....	128
Table 7.6	Case comparison of travel stages .....	130

## *Chapter 1*

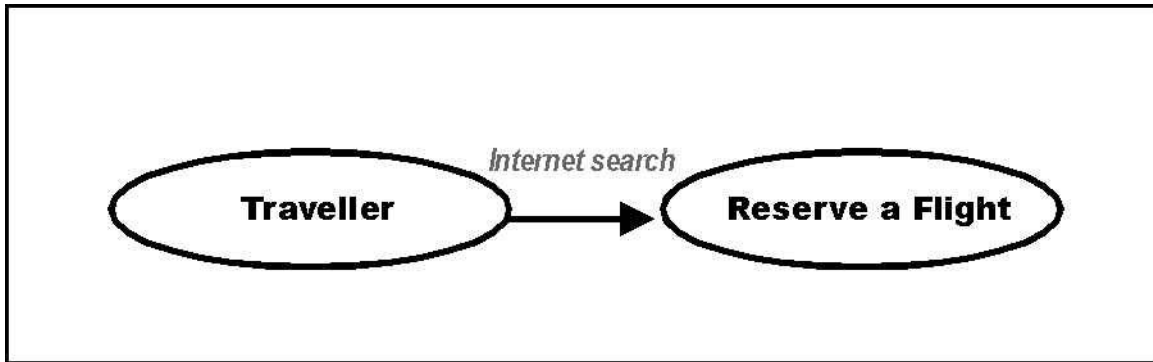
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Framing the Case

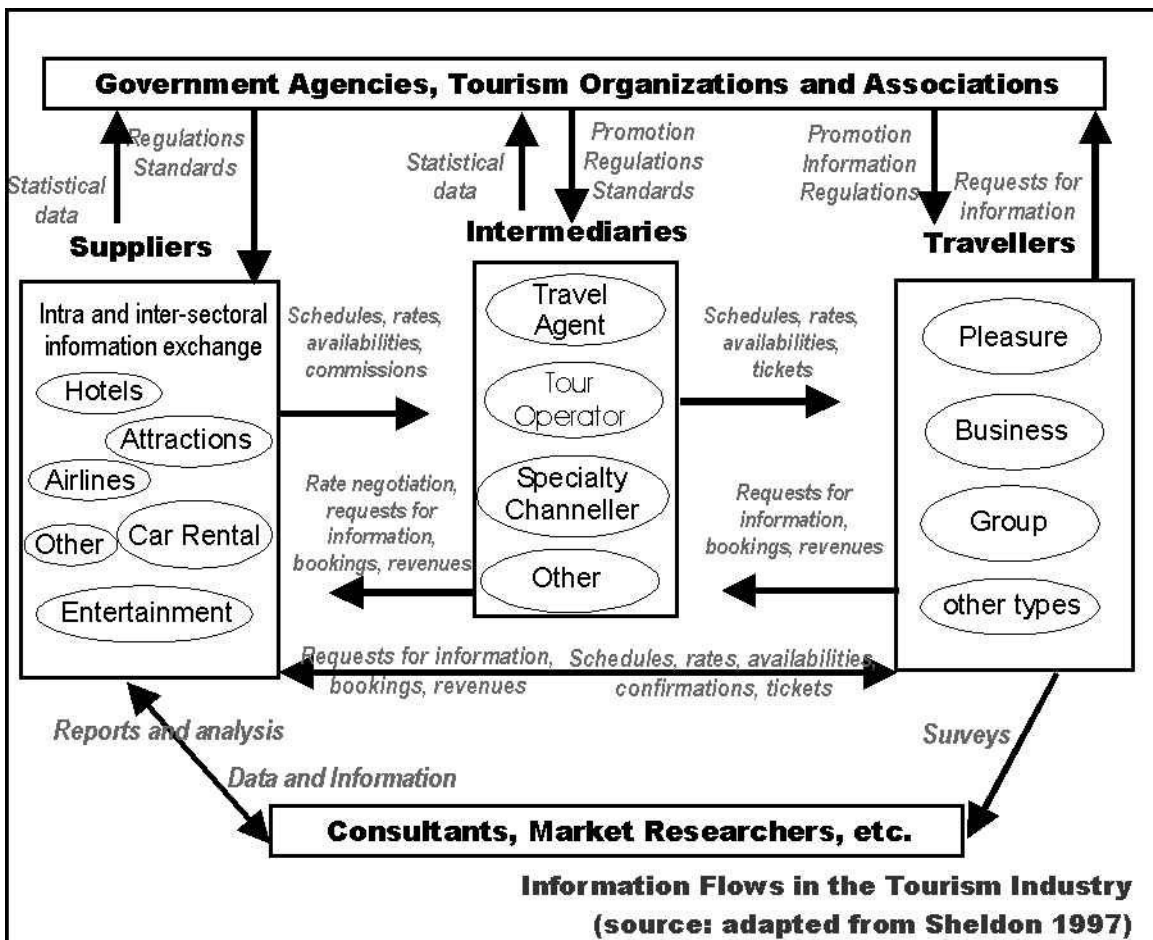
The ever-increasing numbers of people accessing the Internet and the recent explosion of e-commerce world-wide may have considerable implications for the tourism industry. Tourism suppliers are investing in the Internet via web pages, advertising and e-commerce, but what role does the Internet actually play in tourism? Before more money is placed into this new 'e-economy', it is important to study the effectiveness of the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism.

In addition, societal implications of the Internet may stretch further than the marketing realm. Slevin (2000; 55) asserts that "in a fundamental way, the use of the Internet is creating new forms of action and interaction, and re-ordering the way in which individuals interpret and respond to the social world". The Internet is different than any other promotional medium. It functions in many capacities within tourism: as a social activity, an image formation agent, an information source, a means of comparing competitors and as a transaction source, providing opportunities to reserve and purchase travel products. The Internet is a multi-dimensional medium, in contrast to most other media such as brochures, radio, television, magazines, guidebooks, or personal referrals which may target only one dimension. Galani-Moutafi (2000; 213) suggests that "because electronically derived images are so powerful in framing one's perception of a place, the tourist does not resist this version of reality". Sheldon (1997) further argues enthusiastically that information technology such as the Internet "is the backbone that facilitates tourism". As such, it is necessary to understand the extent to which the Internet is being used by potential and actual tourists.

**Figure 1.1 Simple Use of Internet**



**Figure 1.2 Complex Flow of Potential Internet Use**



Smith (1989; 2) describes the multifaceted nature of tourism as a human experience, a social behaviour, a geographic phenomenon, a resource, a business, and an industry. The Internet can play various roles within this multifaceted tourism – as a communicative tool, an information source, or a travel facilitator, to name a few. Direct relationships between the Internet and tourism can range from the very simple (Figure 1.1) to the very complex (Figure 1.2). These relationships can also be examined more generally in terms of new communication technologies within society. Chesebro and Bertelsen (1996;182) suggest that

*“every new technology questions the existing culture because it offers alternative ways of doing things, and in the process, it highlights different features of the environment, generates a new vocabulary for talking about experiences, and ultimately leads to alternative explanations of experience”.*

Since the Internet has been shown in recent literature to be a pervasive system in tourism (Milne 1996; Walle 1996; Williams, Bascombe, Brenner and Green 1996; Hanna and Millar 1997; Marcussen 1997; Connolly, Olsen and Moore 1998; Buhalis 2000; Buhalis 2001; Hansell 2001), it is important to understand its roles in more detail.

## 1.2 Research Goal and Objectives

### 1.2.1 Guiding Questions

The basis for the research questions lies in the assumption that the Internet is an important information source for participants in tourism and, as such, figures prominently in various tourism decision-making processes. From this, the goal for this dissertation is to examine the use of the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism. In order to fulfill this goal, the following questions will be explored:

- a. How is the Internet being used by potential (definition to be discussed in section 2.7) and actual tourists?
- b. At what stages of the travel experience are people using the Internet?

- c. Is the Internet influencing travel patterns?
- d. Have people made different choices because of the Internet?
- e. Are certain tourist types more likely to use the Internet as their information and/or transaction source preference?
- f. Since novelty-seeking tourists require a greater variety and more intensive use of information (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987), are they more apt to use the Internet than familiarity seeking tourists?

When addressing these questions, it is necessary to examine both supply and demand aspects of information availability and wants in order to gain an holistic account of the issues.

Because the present form of the Internet (the World Wide Web) has only been in existence since 1992 (Slevin 2000), there is less than a decade of research to draw upon. Further, literature which examines the Internet and tourism has only recently emerged (Walle 1996; Williams, Bascombe, Brenner and Green 1996; Schonland and Williams 1996; Marcussen 1997; Buhalis 2001) although it is a rapidly growing topic of research. Bearing this in mind, the literature underpinning this dissertation will be drawn from bodies of thought pertaining to four themes as they relate to the guiding questions:

1. To address a) *How is the Internet being used by potential and actual tourists?* and b) *At what stage of travel are people using the Internet?* I will examine literature concerned with patterns of Internet use and its adoption within society.
2. To address c) *Is the Internet influencing travel patterns?* and d) *Have people made different choices because of the Internet?* I will examine literature related to tourism pursuits, products and/or services linked to the Internet.
3. To address e) *Are certain tourist types more likely to use the Internet as their information and/or transaction source preference?* Literature comparing the Internet to other media and links to decision making and marketing will be examined.
4. To address f) *Since novelty-seeking tourists require greater variety and more intensive information (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987), would they be more apt to use the Internet than other sources?* Segmentation studies will be considered, particularly as they relate to novelty-seeking and familiarity preferences.

### 1.2.2 Significance of the Research

This research is potentially significant in a number of different ways. A need has been expressed for valid measurement tools that can be applied generically in tourism (Lee and Crompton 1992; Dann, Nash and Pearce 1988; Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). Thus, this dissertation explores the validity of applying novelty-seeking measurement scales to information source stimuli. Specifically, the International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale (Mo 1991, Jiang 1995) is used to examine Internet use among tourists. Extending an existing valid measurement tool into other realms will help to strengthen the theoretical base of tourism which has received criticism for being "unsophisticated and lacking" (Dann 1988). By examining the relationship between tourists' novelty preferences and such important decision-making factors as information sources, this study also seeks to contribute to the understanding of the uses of information sources and novelty seeking.

The proposed study will also address the roles of the Internet in decision making. This research is potentially significant to suppliers in the tourism industry. As more and more business is conducted over the Internet, many tourism suppliers are also investing into e-commerce. This research will provide destination marketers and managers with insights on the use of the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism. By examining the relationships between information sources and specific tourist segments, suppliers will be able to better target and manage their marketing and advertising expenditures.

Finally, this research is significant as a theoretical contribution in exploring the impact that the Internet is having on the tourism industry as it is embraced by society. In particular, this research identifies the importance of the Internet as an information source in various stages of travel, and the extent to which it has been adopted by tourists.

## 1.3 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is organized into nine chapters. In Chapter One, the reasons for performing the research are introduced and the goals and significance of the research are outlined. Chapter Two explores the concepts underlying the research questions and reviews related literature to identify the gaps that are addressed by this study. The research design and data collection methods are summarized in Chapter Three. Chapters Four, Five and Six describe three case studies. The relevant supply-sides are detailed at the beginning of each of these three chapters, followed by a description of the demand side (the respondents' characteristics, Internet use and novelty-seeking preferences). Chapter Seven provides a detailed comparison between the three case studies. Chapter Eight discusses the findings and implications on a broader scale as they related to the gaps identified in the literature. Conclusions and recommendations derived from the analyses are also offered in the final chapter.



## *Chapter 2*

### SETTING THE CONTEXT

#### **2.1 Realms of Thought**

Realms of thought, such as the relationships between society and information technology (McLuhan 1962; Slevin 2000), the effects of the media on culture (McLuhan 1964; Innis 1972; McLuhan and Powers 1989; Chesebro and Bertelsen 1996), the dawning of the information age (Castells 1989; Castells 2000), and the tourism phenomenon in society (Mayo and Jarvis 1981; Urry 1990; Rojek and Urry 1997) are only a few of the contexts in which the relationship between the Internet and tourism could be examined.

It is important to consider philosophies and their ways of looking at the relationship between society, space, place and environment and how the Internet and tourism is positioned within these realms. The objective is not to undertake an in-depth analysis of each, but rather to illustrate the various schools of thought that have provided a theoretical context in which to base this research and interpret the findings.

#### **2.2 Postmodern Marketing**

Postmodernism is based on the idea that there is no one absolute truth and no one answer, only interpretations, and it is most often defined by what it is not (Barry 1999). While Urry (1990) defines postmodernism as the dissolving of boundaries, Dear (1986) explains that postmodernism can be viewed and classified at three levels: style (architecture), method, and epoch (time period). It is the 'epoch' of post-modernism that is of primary interest in this dissertation, and has been suggested to be a useful arena for examining the complexities of tourism (Ryan 1995) and marketing (Brown 1995). The current time in history has been referred to as a 'post-modern epoch' in an effort by some to encapsulate certain similar societal

characteristics and attribute a particular time element to them, and justification for their appearance.

In its simplest form, postmodernism maintains that there is no one truth outside interpretation. Thus, a postmodernist view would suggest that scientific rationalism cannot be depended on to give objective truth (Dear 1986). It opens the door for the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries, and challenges ontological assumptions and what constitutes acceptable evidence in the scientific tradition (Rosenau 1992). Postmodernists argue that truth is not so much a discovery but a construction (Harvey 1989). This perspective allows the researcher to re-interpret language and text (see Section 2.3 for a further discussion on language and text)<sup>1</sup>. Truth is relative and is dependent on the individual's experience and culture (Rojek, 2000). Thus, we are prompted to question reality and meaning, and encouraged to explore relationships and look for alternative explanations within society.

Postmodernism has been criticized for being too ambiguous, having a limited individualistic focus and an over-emphasis on aesthetics (Barry 1999). But these traits are perhaps beneficial for considering the function of the Internet in tourism. The ambiguity allows a greater latitude in lines of reasoning, thereby permitting previously separated methodologies to be incorporated into the same study. Since the Internet is a recently adopted phenomenon in society that has seen relatively little academic research examining its use in tourism, greater latitude in methodologies may be helpful.

When approaching new lines of research and exploring new relationships or existing relationships from a new perspective, it can be argued that one **grand theory** or philosophy of

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<sup>1</sup> Postmodernism and post-structuralism have many overlapping ideals and premises. In addition, the 'thinkers' associated with these theories are often not associated exclusively with one or the other. (Johnston, R. J., D. Gregory, et al., Eds. (2000). The Dictionary of Human Geography. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.)

society<sup>2</sup> may not provide an appropriate framework for investigation and interpretation. Post-modernists argue that modernist meta-narratives that seek universal truths by examining the relationships between people and places, have failed to account adequately for differences within society (Kitchin and Tate 2000). The differences however, are often of interest in tourism research and marketing (Goeldner, Ritchie, and McIntosh 2000). One of the prime motives to travel is the search for something different or new, in other words, novelty seeking (Snepenger 1987; Lee and Crompton 1992).

Experiencing a different culture has been studied as a motive to travel (Cohen 1993) and it has also been suggested that it is a 'sign' of postmodernism (Rojek and Urry 1997). "During organized capitalism [the 'modern' era], tourism and culture were relatively distinct social practices in both time and space" (Rojek and Urry 1997:3), but the postmodern 'epoch' has blurred the boundaries between tourism and culture (Lash and Urry 1987). Thus, tourism and culture have become synonymous. Tourism as an acceptable manner in which to spend time away from work has become accepted in society and adopted into many cultures as a regular leisure activity. The cultural effects can be seen in the forms of acculturation (Walker 2001), cultural commodification (Marwick 2001) and intercultural communication. Acculturation occurs when two cultures come into contact, and each becomes somewhat like the other through the process of borrowing (Erismann 1983). Cultural commodification is seen via the marketing of culture as tourist attraction or culture expressed as a commodity for sale (Jewsiewicki 1995). Further, intercultural communication has been suggested to contribute to the removal of social or national prejudices and the promotion of better understanding and positive social change (Erismann 1983). Tourism has also been hailed as a catalyst to promote

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<sup>2</sup> The search for a unified grand theory which seeks to reveal universal truths and meaning is traditionally a **modernist** concern (Kitchin, R. and N. J. Tate (2000). Conducting Research in Human Geography: Theory, Methodology and Practice. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.)

adaptive changes in local culture while preserving or revitalizing local ethnic and cultural identity (Silver, 1993; Medina 2003).

It has also been suggested that the trend toward traditional 'mass' tourism is shifting to smaller, more specialized, cultural endeavours (Rojek and Urry 1997). This has, in turn, resulted in cultural life becoming more fragmented and pluralistic (Lash and Urry 1987). As part of the culture of consumption and the creator of images (Harvey 1989), tourism has been regarded as the example *par excellence* of a postmodernist world where basic wants are satisfied, and status is derived from the possession of symbols (Ryan 1995). The now weakened or dissolved boundaries between phenomena such as culture and tourism have allowed the media to have a significant impact on society through the use of symbolization (Urry 1990), particularly in marketing and advertising tourism-related products. The media have "enabled people to adopt the styles of other groups, to transgress boundaries between different social groupings" (Urry 1990: 91). Postmodernists also emphasize the importance of media to society (Lyotard 1984). Kumar (1997) proposes that postmodernists see the media as much more than a method of communication.

*"For them the media today do[es] not so much communicate as construct. In the sheer scale and ubiquity they are building a new environment for us, one which demands a new form of response. The media have created a new 'electronic reality' suffused with images and symbols, which has obliterated any sense of an objective reality behind the symbols...In hyper reality it is no longer possible to distinguish the imaginary from the real" (Kumar 1997:99).*

Culturally, the growth and influence of the media, from marketing and advertising industries to television, radio and movies, have led to significant changes in how people see the world. Many postmodernists argue that image is everything, image is reality (Brown 1995). Disneyland, McDonalds, and beer advertisements are real life (Baudrillard 1983; Rojek and Urry 1997). Real life is what is projected through the media and, as such, media become real life.

Postmodernism and the new information technology seem to go hand in hand. Television, with its fragmented sequences of images and entertainment orientation has often been the focus of discussion (McLuhan 1964; Havick 2000). However, it would not be difficult to view the Internet in these same terms, as fragmented sequences and as an entertainment source. The structure of the World Wide Web is a compilation of linked fragments. In order to obtain information from a Web site, various steps must be surmounted or hyperlinks must be made. In addition, accessing the Internet is increasingly becoming a chosen source of entertainment (GVU 2000).

In contrast to the Marxism of the modern era, whereby culture was interpreted in terms of economics and class conflict, postmodernists have interpreted culture in terms of other types of power struggles (Foucault 1980). Foucault argued that human societies can be seen as places in which forms of knowledge (discourses) exercise power over people through the way that they think and behave. Thus, knowledge is what drives society. If it is agreed that information is the basis for knowledge, it would follow that the drive for knowledge can be achieved through the access of information. Since the Internet can be an extremely fast and readily available information resource, people will embrace this resource as their pathway to knowledge. It can be argued that these are the reasons that the Internet has been so widely adopted throughout the western world, and why there is the potential for the Internet to influence decision making.

*“Most postmodernist thinkers are fascinated by the possibilities for information and knowledge production, analysis and transfer. Lyotard (1984), for example, firmly locates his arguments in the context of new technologies of communication and, drawing upon Bell’s and Touraine’s theses of the passage to ‘postindustrial’ information-based society, situates the rise of postmodern thought in the heart of a dramatic social and political transition in the languages of communication in advanced capitalist societies” (Harvey 1989).*

Lyotard (1984) offers that knowledge as ‘a principle force of production’ has occurred because the technical and social conditions of communication have changed.

From a postmodernist perspective on researching tourism, in segmentation studies for example, there are many dualisms. On the one hand, postmodernists suggest that society is moving away from being a “mass” phenomenon, to many smaller groups with more specific needs and wants. On the other hand, they suggest that society is rebelling against the formation of boundaries and groups. The Internet reinforces this dualism. As more people are embracing the Internet, availability and accessibility is growing and this, in turn, is dissolving barriers for use. Internet use has become widespread. At the same time, the Internet has fostered interest in the development of smaller groups and niche marketing. Marketing patterns have also shifted from mass marketing to targeting increasingly smaller segments (micro marketing) (Sivadas, Grewel, and Kellaris 1998), thus re-forming smaller groups. The Internet has segmented many types of travel and has provided a link to these specific ‘niche markets’ on most travel Web sites. For example, golf holidays, ecotourism, backpacking, and cruises are becoming increasingly available and promoted through the Internet.

## 2.3 Post-Industrial Economics

As Postmodernism has been employed as an approach to encourage the questioning and re-interpretation of reality and meaning, post-industrialism can be employed to re-evaluate the economic structure of society. Post-industrialism allows exploration of the notion that society has moved into an epoch which will embrace the Internet. Indeed, the technological determinism displayed by Bell (1973), which suggests that new information technology has transformed society, is an interesting proposition to explore.

The works of Daniel Bell have often been linked to the concept of the post-industrial society (Hall, Held, and McGrew 1992). He maintained that the traditional agriculture-based society

progressed to a manufacturing-based industrial society, and then to the 'post-industrial' society where the service sector dominates. A closer look reveals that Bell (1973) believed that theoretical knowledge would be the driving force of production in a post-industrial society, and that the factory would be replaced by research and development laboratories and universities, thereby creating a 'knowledge society'.

Technology figures prominently in this line of thinking, as it is seen to aid in the production and communication of 'knowledge' (Teare 1994). Rojek and Turner (1993: 79) also assert that principle features of post-industrialism include the explosion of information and the social impacts of new information technology. However, Cohen and Zysman (1987) argue that the post-industrial economy is a myth and that, currently, we are simply experiencing a different type of industrial economy (Cohen and Zysman 1987). In either case, as an example, there is evidence that a large portion of the U.S. economy is currently based around and dependent upon information technology (Hart 2000).

The classic theory of post-industrialism has been succinctly summarized into three points by Castells (2000):

1. The source of productivity and growth lies in the generation of knowledge, and extends to all realms of economic activity through information processing.
2. Economic activity shifts from goods production to services delivery.
3. The new economy will increase the importance of occupations with a high information and knowledge content in their activity.

Weichart (1987) argues that some societies have currently reached a post-industrial structure. These societies show a "high availability of time at free disposal for wide parts of the population, offering the opportunity for new modes of consumption and leisure behaviour, which result in changing patterns of supply settings and phenomena like mass tourism" (Weichart 1987:49).

From the perspective of technological determinism, Gackenbach (1998: 16) states that “technology affects all patterns of human activity and that changes to technology constitute the single most important changes in society”. Franklin (1990) and Rowland (1997) take similar approaches in arguing that technology does not just appear, but is developed by society for a reason. As it is adopted, complex relationships are formed within and between the social, environmental, economic, and political realms in which it is used. Thus, the Internet is a participant in and the outcome of the history of technological development, not just a sudden and inexplicable arrival (Gackenbach 1998).

While this theoretical approach has been suggested and utilized to guide social research (Lafferty and van Fossen 2001), it has also been criticized for its focus on economy (Brown 1995). However, it is necessary to consider the importance of economics and, by incorporating a post-industrialist perspective one is reminded that economics are an integral part of social relationships. To achieve an holistic perspective on the Internet and tourism, it is essential to consider the economic dimension.

## 2.4 The Internet – A Post-Structuralist Language

Post-structuralism builds upon the strengths of the structuralist theoretical foundation but is also very often linked with postmodernism. Many of the thinkers associated with postmodernism are also linked with post-structuralist philosophy, for example, Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard and Lyotard (Brown 1995). Post-structuralists emphasize language as a critical reality in society. They contend that language is “the medium for defining and contesting social organization and subjectivity” (Johnston, Gregory, Pratts, and Watts 2000).

Innis (1972: 10) discussed language and the importance of writing in the shaping of society:



*“The written record sign, sealed, and swiftly transmitted was essential to military power and the extension of government. Small communities were written into large states and states were consolidated into [an] empire. The monarchies of Egypt and Persia, the Roman Empire, and the city-states were essentially products of writing. Extension of activities in more densely populated regions created the need for written records which in turn supported further extension of activities”.*

Language is also credited with giving humans cultural significance (Poster 1989) and even making culture possible at all (Rojek 2000).

*“The way we live our lives within society, the constraints and empowerment that operate, take effect in language. Therefore, if we are to understand the relationship between space and society we need to explore the positioning of an individual in relation to language” (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt and Watts 2000: 171).*

McLuhan and Powers (1989: 27) maintain that “the media themselves, and the whole cultural ground, are forms of language”. The Internet, as a medium and an expression of culture can thus be seen as a form of language. McLuhan (1989) further contends that information does not exist in the abstract, and that the medium itself has an exceptional influence. Saussure suggests “that a language existed only in terms of how it was spoken by a large group of people in a definitive geographic area” (as quoted in McLuhan and Powers 1989: 49). So, the Internet continues to exist as it is adopted world-wide as a language, and as a method of communication. But its effects on society extend only as far as and to the extent that the language is used. There are critics who suggest that the Internet will never be adopted world-wide because it is dependent on accessibility to hardware and software and many do not and never will have the necessary resources. Although this may be true, research to obtain an understanding of the Internet’s influences is still highly relevant to those who do adopt this ‘language’ through which to fulfill their tourism needs.

Within post-structuralism, there are several lines of thinking that can be extended to consider the relationship between the Internet and tourism. In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault (1989: 46) suggests that society should be:

*“...no longer treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course discourses are composed of signs, but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to language (langue) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe” (Foucault 1989:46).*

The objects that form as a result of discourse are images and, drawing from postmodernism, images become people’s reality. In tourism studies, images are central to a wide variety of theories and research activities (WTO 1979; Smith 1992; Cohen 1993; Lubbe 1998; Rubin and Linturi 2001). Studies on authenticity and image formation are two of the areas which rely on the importance of images to people (Dilley 1986; Dann 1996; Waller and Lea 1999). In addition, various sources of media, such as television, radio, movies and brochures have been studied as to their effectiveness in creating touristic images (Dilley 1986; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Gartner 1993). Image formation has also been part of many recent tourism decision-making models (Pearce and Butler 1993; Baloglu 2000; Goossens 2000). If television, radio, movies, books, and brochures are all instrumental in image formation, then surely the Internet, which encompasses most of the properties of these various media, can be said to be image forming as well? As the Internet may be influential in image formation, it can be hypothesized that the Internet may also be influential in decision making.

If we take Foucault’s line of thought one step further and examine the importance of groupings of signs and how they form the objects of which they speak, it is possible to see a second potential link between the Internet, tourism and decision making. If the tourism categories offered on the Internet (for example, cruises, ski trips, pilgrimages or ecotourism) are viewed as being groupings of signs, what sorts of ‘objects’ are formed as a result? A simple search for travel information could lead a person to select a category which was not directly related to their original motive for the search. The following questions can be explored along these lines. Does a recursive relationship exist between tourism categories on the Internet and the person

searching for information? In other words, is the decision making of tourists or potential tourists influenced because of the categories or groupings on the Internet? Are people attracted to new or different types of tourism because of the Internet?

## 2.5 Supply and Demand Relationships

Tourism research has traditionally focused on either the supply or the demand side, with the majority of academic studies investigating the demand side (Aroch 1985; Crouch 1994; Lee 1996; Klaric 1999; McCabe 2000). Recently however, there has been a call for a more integrated approach to tourism research (Jamal and Hollinshead 2001). Conceivably, looking at both sides at the same time will allow a more in-depth understanding of a particular issue to be achieved. To borrow from post modernists, perhaps the boundaries between supply and demand should be removed and a more holistic approach should be employed. For example, examination of the use of the Internet in tourism depends on the fact that suppliers have an on-line presence. It would be difficult to examine how the Internet influences decisions in tourism, without having the *supply* for people to look for. In addition, it would be insufficient to examine the *supply* (presence of suppliers on the Internet) without considering the *demand* (Internet user) aspects. Thus, it is important to explore both supply and demand, and to investigate the Internet as a link between the two. To what extent does the Internet provide this link, and how important is this for potential and actual tourists?

### 2.5.1 The Supply

The Internet, as an advertising and marketing medium, can change the way tourism suppliers interact with their potential customers in many ways (Milne 1996). Table 2.1 outlines the different capabilities of the Internet.

**Table 2.1 Internet Uses for Tourism Suppliers**

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✓ Chat Rooms and discussion groups which provide online correspondence between parties interested in a particular topic. Advertisers can post listings in related groups, or set up their own group;
✓ File transfer and software distribution (FTP). Allows users to download files and software for detailed evaluation;
✓ Electronic mail (email). This provides instant communications for customer inquiries, feedback and technical support;
✓ Information distribution (World Wide Web). Allows users to view, save and print detailed product information;
✓ Hyperlinks. These will link users to a related Web site.

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*source:* adapted from Milne (1996)

Examples of products or services that would fall under the conventional tourism **supply** umbrella include hotels, attractions, airlines, car rental companies, and entertainment facilities. However, because this research is also examining the Internet, **supply** is extended to include destination marketing organizations (DMO), government, Internet service providers, Web browsers, on-line travel agencies and other on-line travel intermediaries. Traditionally, the supply side of tourism has not received as much attention as the demand side among academics (Smith 1994). Of the small number of papers related to the Internet and tourism published, supply side research has typically centered in one of three perspectives: a comprehensive planning approach; a product-specific analysis, or the development of supply side statistical measures (Smith 1994); Table 2.2 highlights examples of the most recent academic Internet and tourism research.

The majority of early academic studies regarding the Internet and tourism focused on the use of the Internet for tourism research (Schonland and Williams 1996). Williams, Bascombe, Brenner and Green (1996) investigated the usefulness of the Internet for conducting tourism research. In the end, this study resulted in little more than the production of a table of contents. The researchers were unable to draw any conclusions as to the efficiency or effectiveness of

**Table 2.2 Areas of Internet and Tourism Research**

Author	Research Area	Method	Purpose or Findings
(Bonn, Furr and Susskind 1999)	Profiling Internet users	Conducted 5,319 face-to-face surveys	Determine demographic and behavioural characteristics for Internet users in tourism
(Hanna and Millar 1997)	Designing web pages for DMO's	Content analysis examining existing tourism Web pages	Management issues Design recommendations Information Content
(Connolly, Olsen, and Moore 1998)	Hotels	Web site analysis	Importance for hotel to utilize the Internet as a distribution channel
(Marcussen 1997)	WWW and tourism use in Europe	Web site analysis	Marketing and strategic implications of WWW
(Walle 1996)	Profiling Internet users in tourism	Interpretation of secondary sources	Classic diffusion of innovations model is invalid for Internet user demographics
(Milne 1996)	South Pacific, tourism, and information technologies (IT)	Interpretation and statistical analysis of secondary sources	More research needed on IT influences in tourism industries
(Schonland and Williams 1996)	Internet as a tourism research tool	On-line surveys	Methodological development of Internet survey design and implementation
(Williams, Bascombe, Brenner and Green 1996)	Conducting tourism research on the Internet	Systematic 'surfing' of the Internet	Assessing the Internet as a research tool

Internet use in tourism, except to suggest that “the development of Internet technologies continues to outpace the ability of tourism researchers to adapt it to their purposes” (Williams, Bascombe, Brenner and Green 1996: 68). Perhaps it is not the abilities of tourism researchers that should be in question here, but rather the manner in which the Internet has been studied. Only in recent academic publications has an attempt been made to balance the theoretical and the empirical in regards to Internet research (Hart 2000).

The industrial norm of looking at a phenomenon from the supply side also holds true for Internet inclusion. There is a wide variety of industry research which includes and even emphasizes Internet use in tourism (FERENCE 1996; Evans 1998; O'Connor 1999; WTO 1999). Much of this research has been undertaken from a marketing perspective, with a focus on its economic implications (Kotler and Rein 1993; FERENCE 1996; Seaton and Bennett 1996).

Airlines were among the first to utilize the Internet to facilitate trip planning, reserving seats and, most recently, purchasing a ticket on-line (Lipman 1998). As a result of the airlines' early adoption of the Internet, much of the published literature utilizes the airlines in case studies (Lee 1996; Sheldon 1997; Lafferty and van Fossen 2001). Most of the e-commerce data in the tourism industry has been generated from business conducted through airlines. Although there are on-going debates about the reliability of on-line statistics (Schonland and Williams 1996; Sora and Natale 1997), the New York Times reported that airline tickets are still the dominant product in e-commerce transactions (Hansell 2001).

The Internet can add immense marketing power to both small and large tourism businesses (Milne 1996). One large company, the National Car Rental Company, was on the brink of bankruptcy, but its recent successes have been attributed to the use of information technology and the Internet (Greenfield 1996). Smaller tourism businesses can also benefit from the Internet by aligning themselves with larger firms or organizations to gain a presence on the Web (Marcussen 1997). The hotel sector, from small bed and breakfasts to international hotel chains, regularly uses the Internet to receive room bookings and many have reciprocal links with government and tourism organization's Web pages (Yoakhum 1998). Reserving and booking hotel rooms have been examined in the context of what people want to see on a hotel's web site (Connolly, Olsen and Moore 1998) and, most recently, what constitutes a 'good' Web page (Milne 1996). There have also been recent studies offering general tips on designing Web pages, mostly in terms of aesthetics, ease of use, and content (Murphy 1999). Promoting

tourism on the Internet was discussed by Hanna and Millar (1997), but the conclusions again only offered suggestions on Web page composition, managerial issues (such as insuring information on-line is kept up-to-date) and information content (Hanna and Millar 1997). These topics have been the focus of many marketing studies as hotels are increasingly putting more of their marketing budgets into Web pages on the Internet (Sheldon 1997; O'Connor 1999).

Calantone and Mazanec (1991: 110) note that tourism is one of the last industries to experience the change from a seller's to a buyer's market. As a result, marketing techniques have been slower to advance and have focused too long on influencing customers rather than developing an explanatory model of travel decision-making and testing its validity (Calantone and Mazanec 1991).

The more recent emphases of various marketing studies concerning tourism are outlined in Table 2.3. A change in marketing patterns has followed the post-modern tourism shift from a macro to micro trend. Recently, it has been suggested that "general market affluence has been replaced by highly specific market niches, each having very individualistic characteristics and behaviours" (Ritchie 1999). This enthusiasm for 'micro-marketing' as an attempt to understand contemporary consumer behaviour is a classic example of postmodern *fragmentation* (Brown 1995). The former mass tourism focus, highlighting group travel, is being replaced by more specific marketing to distinct groups – *target or micro-marketing* (Heath and Wall 1992; Middleton 1998). When considering micro-marketing, the Internet's appeal to specialized groups is clearly relevant. The Internet allows clients from specific market niches to quickly and easily find travel opportunities. For example, a skier in search of a holiday can easily search the Internet for all holidays catering to skiers. With on-line travel databases, such as *SkiTravel.com* or *expedia.ca*, destinations which may have been previously unknown to a potential tourist become new possibilities.

**Table 2.3 Marketing Research Benefits to Tourism**

*Contributions of Marketing Research*

- Identification of the main attributes anticipated by each market segment.
- Design and attributes required for tourism products and services.
- Evaluation and development of destination image.
- Segmentation of market and development of corresponding marketing mixes.
- Opening new markets and reducing dependency on existing ones.
- Evaluation of the elasticity of demand for each market segment.
- Reduction of seasonality by matching supply with market segments.
- Examination of reasons deterring people (suppressed demand) from visiting destinations.
- Assessment of compatibility of other target markets.
- Examination of alternative distribution channels.
- Assessment of tourism impacts to the destination and selecting appropriate segments.
- Evaluation of marketing effectiveness and selection of other media for promotion.

*source: (Buhalis 2000;103)*

A further focus of Internet research has been in determining the demographics of users (Marcussen 1997). Suppliers see marketing through the Internet as a means of achieving an increase in business activity (Churchill 1991). Ultimately it is economics, or increased activity generated from the Internet that is of interest to tourism suppliers (Vellas and Becherel 1999), although, in terms of 'return on investment', it has been difficult to gauge the economic efficiency of Internet use (Vellas and Becherel 1999). In addition, Connolly and Olsen (1998) revealed that not all shoppers use the Internet for the actual purchase of a product or service even though information from the Web may have been an influencing factor. A Commerce Net-Nielsen survey found that 53% of Internet users used the Web to reach a purchasing decision, yet only 15% completed their purchase online (as reported by *CyberAtlas.com* 1998). E-commerce has been difficult to predict or even to measure accurately (Loader 1997).



Simply having a Web site does not ensure the generation of more business. Thus, there is also a need to examine the demand side, to gauge the extent to which tourists and potential tourists are using the Internet and why. Vellas and Becherel (1999: 115) stress the importance of obtaining greater understanding of the behaviour of potential e-commerce users in the tourism industry.

Currently, the most widely used method to research effectiveness of Web sites is through monitoring the number of 'hits' they receive (how often a particular site is accessed on the Internet) (CyberAtlas.com 2001). However, studying the effectiveness of the Internet in a tourism context strictly from a 'measurement of hits per site' basis can be problematic. For example, if a visitor information Web site is monitored for the number of times it is accessed, does this measure its effectiveness? Perhaps it is just popular among Internet 'surfers' for a particular characteristic that has little to do with the original purpose for the Web site. In terms of decision making, this usage measurement alone cannot allow the making of generalizations or conclusions regarding effectiveness. Measuring the number of hits may be helpful, but more information is necessary before any outcomes can be inferred. Jamal and Hollinshead (2001) suggest that numerical assessments are often inadequate when studying complex relationships. In fact, "matters of causality are ...problematic, and often numerical frequency, per se, is of little significance to the matter at hand" (Jamal and Hollinshead 2001: 70). This is not to say that these measurements are useless; only that perhaps multiple approaches and data collection methods should be used when examining the complexities of the Internet and decision making.

### 2.5.2 The Demand

Pearce (1993: 113) defines tourism demand as "the outcome of tourists' motivation, as well as marketing, destination features and contingency factors such as money, health and time relating to the traveller's choice behaviour" (Pearce 1993: 113). To study demand, the tourists

or potential tourists themselves must be considered. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) define potential tourists as “people who engage in information searches about destinations”.

MacKay (1998) identified three inter-related areas of research that attempt to understand, explain and predict travel behaviour: why people travel, how people make the decision to travel and how they choose where to travel. These concerns have been addressed in a number of ways: through tourism research on demographics, motivation, image formation, novelty-seeking and destination decision making (Ratkai, Smale, Sylvester and Caldwell 1991; Gartner 1993; Getz and Sailor 1993; Lubbe 1998). Various segmentation strategies have evolved from these areas of research (Plog 1974; Iso-Ahola 1980; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Sirakaya, McLellan, and Uysal 1996) in an attempt to identify travel typologies and market destinations. Often the goal is to determine particular tourist segments and to target appropriate advertising to them (Uysal, Zimmerer, and Bonn 1990). In this dissertation, the goals behind examining segmentation studies are twofold: 1) to employ the International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale (Jiang 2000) to categorize respondents and examine its usefulness as a segmentation tool, and 2) to explore its ability to link with other variables, such as information source preferences. Since the ITR Scale segmentation has been accepted as a valid model in tourism research (Basala 2001, Jiang, 2000), it is hoped that it will provide a stable set of variables with which to examine various Internet prospects.

### 2.5.3 The Motivation

Studying human motivation can help to understand “why” we choose to do something. Motives have been defined as “enduring, long-lasting determinants of behaviour which are likely to apply across situations an individual meets” (Pearce and Stringer 1991). Thus, they have been seen as a somewhat stable psychographic variable with which to perform tourism research (Cohen 1979; Mayo and Jarvis 1981).

One of the most widely cited theories of human motivation is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs<sup>3</sup> (Table 2.4) which proposes that humans have five basic sets of needs:

**Table 2.4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

- 
- Physiological Needs: food, water, gratification etc.
  - Safety Needs: security, stability, dependency, order, and protection
  - Belongingness and Love Needs: affection, togetherness
  - Esteem Needs: strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence, prestige
  - Self-Actualization Needs: desire for self-fulfillment
- 

*source: (Maslow 1970)*

This type of psychographic categorization has been subsequently adopted in many recreation, leisure and tourism studies (Mayo and Jarvis 1981; Pearce 1988).

Depending on one's theoretical perspective, the analysis of motivation can be central or peripheral to research. Dann (1981) proposes two world views: micro and macro. The macro perspective espouses that society, culture and institutions operate as one system and suggests that motivation be studied on the basis of potential global impact, flow charts, and various systems of supply and demand. Conversely, the micro perspective focuses on individual and small group interactions, and employs interviews and workshops to study motivation (Dann 1981).

In keeping with the postmodern view, the trend is moving towards a micro perspective in motivation research, where the focus is on researching patterns of behaviour at a particular time. Behavioural research, such as the study of motivation, can help to understand the choices, preferences and requirements of visitors (Pearce 1993). From a marketing point of view, "a person's motives offer a better basis for predicting future

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<sup>3</sup> Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory was first presented and published in Psychology in 1943, but perhaps the most widely cited and in-depth discussion comes from his 1970 publication "Motivation and Personality" Maslow, A. H. (1970). Motivation and Personality. New York, Harper and Row.

behaviour...and we are in a better position to influence future behaviour” (Churchill 1991: 313).

**Table 2.5 Approaches to Researching Motivation in Tourism**

<i>Approach</i> (based on Dann 1981)	<i>Description or Current Research Focus</i>	<i>Supporting Research(ers)</i>
Push and Pull Factors	Example of push motive - relaxation, escape Example of pull motive - sunshine, ocean	(Crompton 1979) (Goossens 2000)
Motivation as Fantasy	“tourists aim to free themselves” (Dann 1981)	(Buck 1978) (Ryan and Kinder 2000)
Travel as a Response to What is Lacking Yet Desired	Novelty-seeking	(Snepenger 1987; Ratkai, Smale et al. 1991; Lee and Crompton 1992) (Dimanche and Havitz 1994; Jiang, Havitz et al. 2000)
Motivational Typologies	Trip Classification Typologies	(Dann 1981) (Mathieson and Wall 1982) (Lowyck, Van Langenhove et al. 1992) (Saarinen 1997)
Motivation and Tourist Experiences	Quest for authenticity and meaning	(Cohen 1979) (MacCannell 1973) (Waller and Lea 1999)
Motivation as Auto-Definition and Meaning	Search for the “Self” & ‘Other’, or self-fulfillment	(Galani-Moutaffi 2000)

Pearce (1993) proposed that “motivational theories are needed to engineer one’s marketing strategy for a target region so that it appeals to the needs of potential visitors” (Pearce 1993: 115). Theories in motivation research were categorized by Dann (1981) and have been adapted and summarized in Table 2.5. This table does not include all types of or approaches to motivation research, but it does offer an historic point of reference and the ability to link past ideas with more current areas of study.

Pearce (1982: 21) suggests that “one of the notable gaps in the existing literature on travel motivation is the failure to build on previous studies”. From Table 2.5 it is evident that there may indeed be gaps in research, but many of the motives originally identified by Dann (1981) have recently been re-examined. One decade later, Mansfeld (1992)

maintained that the gaps still existed, but attributed this situation to the complex nature of travel motivation. He concluded that it is important to extend accepted theories into new situations or realms of tourism to check applicability and validity (Mansfeld 1992). For this study the theory behind the ITR Scale, psychographic segmentation based on measures of novelty seeking preferences, is extended into researching the use of the Internet.

Plog (1974) developed a psychographic model and then applied a segmentation scheme to various tourism settings. Based on extensive telephone interviews and a 4,000 person U.S. national survey, Plog asserted that specific travel preferences and behaviours were associated with each market segment. It was reported that the various segments had particular media preferences, with psychocentrics being heavy television watchers and allocentrics more print-oriented (Plog 1974). These linkages with media preferences indicate the possibility of utilizing psychographic (or motivational) segmentation to research Internet usage.

Iso-Ahola (1980) approached the study of motivation by considering leisure activity needs. Various levels of stimulation were categorized to create a framework of intrinsic leisure motivation. Iso-Ahola (1980) argues that these needs will change over time, across places, and are dependent on situations and social company. Iso-Ahola's approach has been criticized as having limited applicability from a marketing or industry standpoint, and as having limited future use due to the difficulty of measuring optimal arousal, one of his key concepts (Pearce 1993).

Todd (1999) compared various tourism motivation methodologies in terms of their effectiveness in actually measuring motives. Three different survey methodologies were tested in association with Maslow-based motivational categories. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this study: 1) A qualitative method of surveying can obtain good depth of

information, but caution must be taken when analyzing data to ensure that the dominant themes of the description are those that are encoded; 2) while no one particular method is better at measuring tourist motivation, different instruments are needed to collect qualitatively and quantitatively gathered data (Todd 1999). Therefore, when researching tourist motivation, we are cautioned to ensure an appropriate measurement tool is used. If an inappropriate instrument is used, something other than motivation may be measured. It may be prudent then, to employ a tool which has already been accepted as valid, such as the ITR Scale.

A criticism of traditional motivation theory is that it “is piecemeal and lacks a solid foundation, and research has varying degrees of predictive ability” (McCabe 2000: 223). Perhaps this is due to a micro world view (according to Dann 1981). If we change the scale of investigation and employ a macro perspective, we can accept McCabe’s conclusion that leisure and tourism behaviour may be merely a product of social construction. If this is indeed the case, and society is increasingly embracing the Internet as an information source, it is possible that the Internet could shape our future travel trends irrespective of the original motive to travel. Certainly, post-industrialists would argue that since information is seminal to society, an information source such as the Internet would be instrumental in shaping future trends.

Pearce (1993: 119) maintains that when measuring tourist motives, problems occur with data gathering and setting the purpose to be either descriptive or predictive. He concludes that there has been little reliability in predicting future behaviour based on motivation.

Another fundamental issue in researching tourist motivation is that of researching multiple motives versus a single trait or unidimensional perspective (Pearce 1993: 119). Simple demographics or psychographics have proven ineffective in their predictive capabilities due to the requirements of interpreting data according to single ‘trait-based’ assessments of individual differences (Pearce 1993: 119). Therefore, Pearce (1993) concluded that psychographic

groupings are not very effective predictors and explainers of travel behaviour, but rather are effective as a segmentation instrument to be used to establish relationships with other tourism variables (Plog 1974). Pearce thus proposed a Travel Careers Ladder for use as a descriptive tool for segmentation based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Pearce's model has been supported by various other researchers (Mazanec 1995; Holden 1999). Kim (1997), for example, studied the Korean outbound market utilizing the Travel Career Ladder and concluded that the "model was used effectively to describe travel motivation and cross-cultural understanding of International tourists" (Kim 1997: 16). The laddering technique itself has also been praised as being a well-suited method for linking travel choices and motives (van Rekom 1994). One criticism of Pearce's ladder concept was that self-actualization is a 'mature self concept' and may not apply to the young (Ryan 1998). Further problems were noted in the difficulties of questioning individuals over time (Ryan 1998).

All in all, segmenting tourists based upon motivation has been shown to be an accepted method of categorizing tourists, as well as being able to link with other variables to study further relationships. Thus, it is feasible to explore Internet use along with motivation.

#### 2.5.4 Novelty-Seeking

Researching motivation, as reviewed in the previous section, has resulted in many different types of categorization. One such category, novelty-seeking, examines preferences (or searches) for the new or the familiar. Novelty-seeking in tourism research has been used as a basis for tourist classification (Cohen 1972), and for differentiating tourist roles (Dimanche and Havitz 1994; Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). In addition, novelty-seeking as a motive for travel has been argued to lead to more intensive information searches and the use of a greater variety of sources (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987). Various travel motives have been linked to specific information sources (Andereck and Caldwell 1993). Because novelty-seeking tourists require a

greater variety and more intensive use of information, would they be more apt to use the Internet than other sources or other types of tourists? This question is the reason for interest in utilizing a novelty-seeking construct in studies of the use of the Internet.

The concept of novelty seeking has been the focus in both motivation and decision-making research, in addition to segmentation studies (Crompton 1979; Dimanche and Havitz 1994). Novelty is frequently explored in terms of tourists seeking variety and new sources of stimulation (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981; Ratkai, Smale, Slyvester and Caldwell 1991). Finding the obscure has been found to appeal to a certain segment of travellers (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Lee and Crompton 1992). Novelty-seeking could also be applied to Internet searches for travel opportunities. Among Internet users, is it feasible that potential tourists receive a similar 'thrill' at finding the newest web site, or the cheapest deal for an obscure destination or type of travel.

Cohen (1972) formulated a tourist typology consisting of four types of tourists:

- The organized mass tourist
- The individual mass tourist
- The explorer
- The drifter

This typology is based on a continuum of tourist motives from familiarity to novelty and has been the basis of further studies (Cohen and Zysman 1987; Mo, Havitz and Howard 1993; Cohen 1993). Various novelty scales have developed using this type of continuum, with acceptable associated methodologies (Pearson 1970; Lee and Crompton 1992; Mo, Havitz and Howard 1993; Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000).

Lee and Crompton (1992: 748) developed a tourist novelty scale which they felt was a "reliable, stable and valid standardized instrument". In this study, Lee and Crompton conceptualized the construct of novelty in the destination choice process. A limitation however, stems from the fact that their Tourist Novelty Scale was developed specifically in the context of pleasure travel.



Novelty-seeking preferences of international tourists were examined by Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien (2000: 978) in an attempt to validate an International Tourist Role scale. Three dimensions of novelty-seeking were tested which provided support for the findings of Mo, Havitz and Howard (1993). The significant outcome of these studies is that their scale was developed in an international tourist context and has the potential to be expanded to incorporate other possible variables. Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien (2000) state that "the ITR scale would more effectively reflect the novelty-seeking preferences of international tourists if it was supplemented by other measures". Perhaps these other measures could include the use of information sources such as the Internet.

## 2.6 Decision Making

Oppermann suggested that decision making and destination choice are the interfaces between psychology and geography in tourism (Oppermann 2000). In order to consider the effectiveness of the Internet as a marketing tool, it is helpful to understand the decision-making processes in tourism and to identify where the Internet fits in.

Early approaches to research on decision making followed two paths: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical path in geography incorporated the concepts of risk and uncertainty into fields such as game theory<sup>4</sup> and organization theory (Johnston, Gregory, Pratts and Watts 2000).

The empirical path, which introduced the concept of 'economic man', was utilized in early decision-making research, but was later criticized on the basis that it assumed perfect knowledge and economic rationality (Mathieson and Wall 1982). As an alternative to the unrealistic attributes of an optimal 'economic man', Simon (1957) suggested that decisions were

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<sup>4</sup> Game theory arose in the early 1900's as a set of general theorems about behaviour, with the publication of von Neumann's and Morgenstern's (1944) *The theory of games and economic behaviour*. In geography, it is evidenced in the Hotelling Model (Norton, W. (1998). Human Geography. Toronto, Oxford University Press).

made based on their potential to satisfy. This behavioural perspective “assumes that tourists, still acting rationally but on the basis of limited information, seek satisfactory rather than optimal experiences” (Mathieson and Wall 1982).

Measuring satisfaction is still prevalent in tourism decision-making research (Crompton 1996; Baker and Crompton 2000; Schofield 2000) and is also often used as one of the key behavioural attributes when studying motivation (Goll 1994; Gnoth 1997; Ryan and Glendon 1998; Thomas and Butts 1998). In the service industry, measuring satisfaction helps to define success (Fornell, Johnson et al. 1996). Further to this, one of the key factors in determining tourist satisfaction has been the quality of information sources (Baker and Crompton 2000).

Seaton and Bennett (1996) propose that decisions in tourism are made through two avenues: 1) the total information sources used; and 2) the decision-making unit which is comprised of:

- **An initiator**, the person who starts off the decision path;
- **Influencers**, (personal – such as children, or impersonal- such as a movie);
- **Decider**, the person who says ‘Yes, we’ll go there’;
- **Purchaser**, the one who pays for it;
- **User**, the people who consume the final product.

Mathieson and Wall (1982) elaborated on the decision-making process and described the five principle phases which are involved (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6 Five Principle Phases of the Decision-Making Process**

1.	Felt need or travel desire. A desire to travel is felt and reasons for and against meeting that desire are weighed.
2.	Information collection and evaluation. Potential tourists consult travel agents for information, study advertisements and brochures, and talk to experienced travellers or friends and relatives.
3.	Travel decisions. A destination, mode of travel, accommodation and activities are selected.
4.	Travel preparation and travel experience.
	Travel satisfaction evaluation. During and following the travel and stay phases of the trip, the experience is evaluated and the results of these evaluations will influence subsequent travel decisions.

source: (Mathieson and Wall 1982;28)

One common feature of all decision-making models is the information source component. Understanding where information fits into decision making, what kinds of information influence the final destination choice (Mansfeld 1992) and what is the perceived role of the information, are questions that are pursued in decision-making research. If the effectiveness of the Internet is to be determined, then it is important to address these questions.

## 2.7 Information and Image Formation

One of the major factors which influence a consumer's decision to purchase a product or service is information (Andereck and Caldwell 1993). The information or awareness that a person already has about a product or service, in addition to the information they are able to gather and the credibility of such information, are all critical to the consumer in a decision to purchase (Raitz and Dakhil 1989). In tourism, the availability of information is particularly significant as the consumers are commonly located at some distance from the desired product or service (Wicks and Schuett 1991). The importance of information searches in tourism can be summarized as:

- 1) A trip involves using discretionary money and free time, and is a high risk purchase.
- 2) The intangible nature of services suggests that secondary or tertiary sources must be used as a consumer is not able actually to observe the potential product or service to be purchased.
- 3) Vacationers are often interested in visiting new, unfamiliar destinations as a primary travel motive (Gitelson and Crompton 1983).

Information search behaviour may also partly depend on consumer preferences for specific information sources (Andereck and Caldwell 1993). For example, in 1994, 66 percent of those seeking tour packages were strongly influenced by travel agent recommendations (Tourism Canada 1994). Harris and Brown (1992) also examined

information sources used by travelers. Their demographic analyses indicated that certain segments of the population exist that prefer to use particular information sources.

Um and Crompton (1990) proposed a destination choice model, highlighting the importance of internal inputs (i.e. attitudes) and external inputs (i.e. social or symbolic stimuli). These various inputs influence two cognitive constructs of destination “sets”, namely “the awareness set” – what destinations are known and considered initially - and the “evoked set” that is a subset of the awareness set but it receives more thorough examination. They concluded that social stimuli, mostly the recommendations of friends and relatives, dominate as the most important information sources (Um and Crompton 1990). If this is true, then the Internet may be of less significance than some other sources of information, such as word-of-mouth (although it may also be a means by which friends and relatives communicate). Furthermore, Um and Crompton published their work more than a decade ago before Internet access was so widespread.

Baloglu (2000) suggested that evaluation of tourism destinations is determined by the amount of information, types of information sources used, and socio-psychological travel motivations. The variety of information sources used was found to be a strong predictor of image. The types of information sources had different effects on the images of destination offerings. Word-of-mouth acted on perception of quality of experience, while advertisements influenced perception of value and/or environment. Non-promotional sources, such as books and movies, influenced perceptions of destination attractiveness. Baloglu (2000: 85) concluded that “different types of information sources have varying degrees of effects on perceptual and cognitive evaluation”.

Other studies have examined information sources in terms of factors influencing travel behaviour intentions and destination choice (Court and Lupton 1997; Vogt and Fesenmaier 1998). Mayo and Jarvis (1981) modeled travel decision making and proposed

that information sources form beliefs and opinions about a destination, thus creating an image of that destination.

Image formation has been widely studied in motivational and decision-making research (Dilley 1986; Cohen 1993; Gartner 1993; Dann 1996; Lubbe 1998; Baloglu 2000). Images have been shown to result from a variety of stimuli which are connected to information sources (Woodside and Lysonski 1989). Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) model of traveler destination choice emphasized tourism information sources as significant determinants of destination images.

MacKay and Fesenmaier (1998) proposed market segmentation based on behavioural changes throughout the destination choice process. Information searches are suggested to take place at various stages throughout the behavioural model. They conclude that visual information pieces (such as lure brochures) are important in more than the image forming stage of motivation. Support for similar stages in tourism can be found in other studies (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Stringer and Pearce 1984; Pearce 1988; Seaton and Bennett 1996).

Image formation research has also been used to define a potential tourist. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) defined a potential tourist as someone who has engaged in an information search, but it can be argued that the potential to become a tourist exists prior to searching for information. Studies have shown that image formation is part of the decision-making process (Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Gartner 1993) and images can be formed at any point in this process. Thus, it could be argued that a person could be viewed as being a potential tourist at any time, provided there is a stimulus present to incite an image. As such, for this research, even a person who has no stated intention to become a tourist in the near future will be considered as a potential tourist.

Referring back to the post-modern argument, Urry (1990: 7) reasons that in a postmodern society, “via advertising and media, the images generated through different tourist gazes come to constitute a closed self-perpetuating system of illusions which provide the tourist with the basis for selecting and evaluating potential places to visit”. As the Internet is a visual medium which relies on images to convey information, the Internet itself could play a significant role in decision making in tourism.

Throughout this chapter, many relationships between the Internet and tourism have been proposed and explored. The importance of examining Internet use was established in the various discussions surrounding technology, society and travel. Ways in which the Internet could be studied within a tourism context were also considered. Analyzing novelty-seeking behaviour among international tourists using the ITR Scale was proposed as a preferred method of segmentation, as well as providing access to a valid and stable instrument with which to examine Internet use.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

### 3.1 The Paradigm Dialogue

To gather data for the proposed research, multiple methods have been used. Based on the many realms of thought which have guided this research, it is apparent that a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection is necessary. Empirical data collection has been the preferred method in traditional behavioural research and is still used frequently in motivational studies (Ballantyne, Packer and Beckman 1998). However, “the complexity and heterogeneity of the field of tourism suggest that...a pluralistic and even eclectic research strategy is advocated. The many different empirical problems can only be tackled by utilizing a wide range of concepts and research instruments” (Cohen 1979: 31).

Researchers are adopting multiple methods and multiple theoretical approaches to their work (Schultz and Hatch 1996; Stonich 1998). Many of the studies discussed throughout this paper employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, with varying amounts of use of each. In keeping with an holistic approach, the proposed research will also utilize multiple methods – namely case studies, open-ended questioning, and semi-structured interviews. Recent research involving qualitative methods “has sought a more sensitive understanding of how people assign meaning to various aspects of life and how decisions follow from this” (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt and Watts 2000: 52). The methodology of open-ended questions allows the tourists to express their perspectives without directly imposing the researcher’s point of view (Squire 1994; Ateljevic 2000). The use of interpretative qualitative approaches, such as open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, has also been suggested as being valuable methods to gain insight

into the complexities of tourism (Dann 1988; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Jamal and Hollinshead 2001).

The gathering of data using surveys is also necessary for the proposed research in order to utilize the International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale for segmentation (Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). Although the postmodern paradigm is most often associated with qualitative methods (Creswell 1994), Castells (2000) opts to use descriptive statistics to suggest new theoretical understanding. In addition, Ryan (1995) draws a postmodern parallel in support of quantitative data basing his arguments on the importance of symbols in tourism:

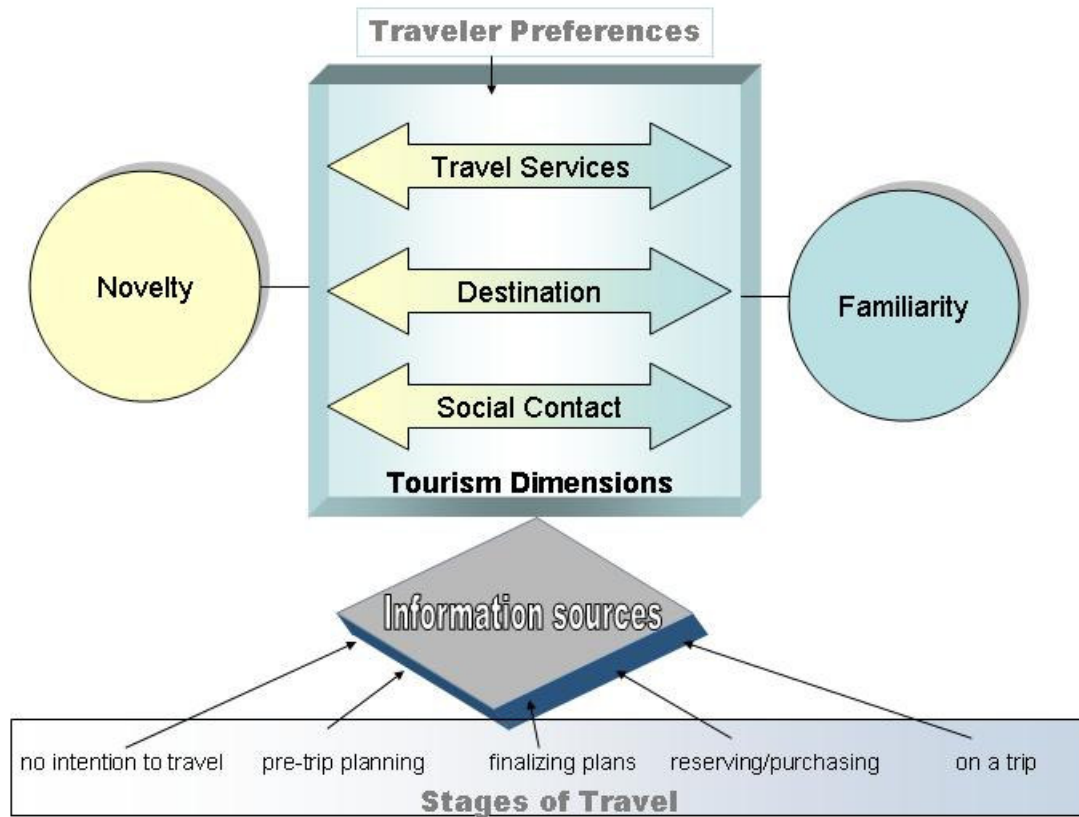
*“The experience of a place is the foundation of the souvenir (that symbol of place) and the statistic derived from research can be seen as a symbol of a type of knowledge about that place. Both souvenir and statistic say something about the people who travel. Both are statements of not only the fact of travel, but the purpose of travel. Indeed, there is much in statistics that is concerned about the explanations of events” (Ryan 1995).*

Iso-Ahola (1980) stresses the importance of timing when questioning tourists about motivation. He maintains that in order to limit culturally supplied explanations or stereotypical responses to questions, researchers must conduct questioning close in time to the actual participation (Iso-Ahola 1980).

Marcus (1994) suggests that it is helpful if there is a ‘configured prototype’ for the population that is being researched. There are indeed accepted models and/or indexes defining tourist typologies, and to deal with some of the above-noted concerns, several models are incorporated in the study. The International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale (Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000) along with MacKay and Fesenmaier's (1998) Stages of Change model have been adapted into Figure 3.0 which provides the basis for measurement in the proposed conceptual framework.



**Figure 3.0 Conceptual Framework**



Much of the current research on information searches by potential and actual tourists has focused either on a particular place or one particular type of tourist or activity. For example, Hyde (2000) found that for international travelers to New Zealand, the majority of information search and planning occurred only after arrival in the country. Detailed plans had usually only been pre-arranged during the pre-trip planning for the first 24 hours of the holiday. In contrast, Milner (2000) found that Japanese travelers to Alaska conducted the majority of their information searches prior to travel, and had purchased most of their tour product prior to their arrival.

## 3.2 Parameters of the study

Since the main focus of this study is Internet use in tourism, the locations for data gathering were chosen based on numbers of Internet users per capita as well as primary destinations for international travelers. Canada is rated among the top 10 destinations for numbers of international tourist arrivals (WTO 2002). In addition, North America, at the time of the study, had the highest per capita number of Internet users (NUA 2000). In terms of a single destination, Banff, Alberta receives a large number of international visitors. During the summer months, approximately 57% of the visitors to Banff are non-canadians (Banff National Park 2000). Banff National Park recorded 4,678,000 visitors in 2001. The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) highlights Banff in their destination portfolio which is used to market Canada to international tourists. The town of Banff also has many locations where tourists can access the Internet while on a trip (for example the Wendy's and McDonalds restaurants, and local library all have Internet access). In addition, the town of Banff maintains one primary Website which includes all local business information and visitor information.

Banff is a four-season destination with a wide variety of activities to appeal to a diverse tourist population. However, in an attempt to avoid a destination or activity bias in this study, data were also gathered from cruise tourists in the Caribbean (an international tourist destination as well).

This study will focus on travel patterns of international tourists with data gathered from two groups: 1) those traveling to or from Canada and 2) the Caribbean. Data collection was limited to four geographic locations, Banff Alberta, Nassau Bahamas, St. Maartin and St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition, two further tourism settings served as locations to conduct surveys and interviews – the Disney Cruise Line and Carnival Cruise Line.

### 3.2.1 Delimitations

1. Many factors interact in travel decision-making processes. However, this study will focus on Internet use as an information source and as it corresponds with different novelty-oriented tourist roles as well as various stages of travel.
2. Purposive sampling was used and data obtained from 3 methods: Web site analysis, semi-structured interviews with suppliers, and self-administered questionnaires handed to tourists.
3. The questionnaire consisted of a variety of questions measuring participants' travel preference for novelty (Mo 1991, Jiang 1995), information source use at various stages of travel (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1998) and various questions regarding participants' socio-demographic characteristics, pre and post-travel behaviour, travel type and intended activities of the present trip.

## 3.3 Methods

This research will employ a multiple case study design, which expands the one-shot case study method. Ryan (1995; 31) argues that with a series of interviews or surveys "it becomes more possible to assess the consistency and validity of responses". A more comprehensive study is developed even though on each occasion different respondents were approached. In the instance of the Caribbean tourists, one case study examines tourists aboard two different cruise lines (Disney and Carnival) during a one-week cruise and also incorporates data gathered from cruise tourists in a port-of-call (Nassau, Bahamas) during a different time period. Surveys were conducted on board cruise lines during April and May 2002 and also in the ports of call on the docks of St. Maarten, Nassau and St. Thomas. Surveys were performed at the cruise docks in Nassau during the month of June 2002.

In the case of Banff tourists, interviews and surveys were conducted at several times throughout a one-year period. The actual time periods are outlined in more detail in sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. The same procedure was followed for all locations and can be divided into three sections to represent each phase of research: Web site analysis, supplier interviews, and surveys.

### 3.3.1 Web Site Analysis

Using two different search engines (Google and MSN), key words were entered into the search criteria and the results were categorized according to the type of travel-related product. The first study used “Banff Winter Tourism”, the second “Banff Summer Tourism” and the third, “Caribbean Cruises”. For both of the Banff cases, suppliers were chosen from the results list in the order that they appeared and as they fitted into groups of general information, accommodation, attraction, transportation, events and cultural information. A content analysis of these Internet Web sites was performed to determine what resources were available on-line for potential and actual tourists. Duplicates were eliminated and each site was accessed to confirm that it was in working order, functioning with no errors, and that it was accessible through the link provided. The first thirty suppliers to meet the criteria listed above were contacted for interviews. All suppliers were sent a standard e-mail seeking their interest in participating in an interview. Two standard questions were posed in the interviews with various suppliers: 1) “What is your main objective or goal for marketing your business on the Internet?” and 2) “How do you gauge/determine the success of marketing via the Internet?” As each case study is distinct due to location, season and primary activities available, identical Web analyses could not be followed from this point forward. Although the procedures remained consistent, for each case the specifics of the analyses will be outlined at the beginning of the relevant chapter.

The Web site analysis for Banff was conducted during the fall months (September, October and November 2001), and the cruise Web sites were examined in January 2002.

The cruise Internet search elicited many more suppliers than were later incorporated in the study but, as the study objective was to examine the supply and Internet use by tourists in a variety of capacities and not to compare suppliers of only one primary activity, the researcher chose to sample two cruise lines whose passengers could also be interviewed.

### 3.3.2 Interviews

As noted in section 3.1, open-ended and semi-structured interviews have been suggested as being valuable methods to use to gain insight into the complexities of tourism decision making (Dann 1988; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Jamal and Hollinshead 2001). Open-ended questions allow the tourists and tourism suppliers to express their perspectives without imposing the researcher's point of view (Squire 1994; Ateljevic 2000). From the first phase, Web site access, a list of suppliers was generated as potential interviewees. From this list, participants were randomly contacted and questioned as to their willingness to participate in the study. The participants were contacted during the months of November and December 2001 via e-mail and were sent a standard letter outlining the study. Those who indicated an interest in participating, were contacted a second time to arrange an interview. Semi-structured interviews then took place in an effort to determine:

- If they have a target market that they are trying to reach through the Internet?
- What features they have put on-line to try to accomplish this.
- If there is a particular stage of travel that they are hoping to connect with among the tourists.
- If they believe that the Internet (on-line presence) has been helpful to their business?

These responses were tabulated using a checklist of key words compiled from pre-test results (Appendix A). This pre-test was performed with randomly chosen tourism supplier's web sites from Niagara Falls, Canada to provide some initial insight into the process. Five suppliers were chosen at random from the Web site list, and were contacted via telephone to answer the two questions listed above. The common words and/or phrases answered were noted and used as a template with which to summarize and build from in the interviews. The first round of interviews was held during December 2001 with the winter suppliers, and the second round of suppliers' interviews were conducted during the summer months 2002.

### 3.3.3 Surveys

A pre-test of the tourists' survey was conducted in Niagara Falls, Ontario during the summer 2001 to gain some initial feedback and gauge the effectiveness of the wording in the questionnaire. People were approached at the Falls Look-out area and forty-seven out of the fifty approached, agreed to fill out the questionnaire. As a result, several questions were omitted which were noted as being confusing and several others were refined. According to Social Exchange Theory (Dillman 1978; Igbaria, Iivari and Maragahh 1995), the decision to complete a survey is based on how the respondents perceive the survey in its entirety. Identifying herself as a student from the University of Waterloo who was performing research dispelled the concern that the surveyor may be trying to sell something and, further, led respondents to believe they were instrumental in furthering knowledge. Hence, a high response rate was obtained as there were only 11 people out of the total 1,210 approached who did not participate.

Surveys took place at various types of locations: accommodations, activity sites/attractions and at local Internet cafes. An effort was also made to vary the times of the day and the

days of the week to avoid possible bias in time. The same surveyor conducted all of the questionnaires, thereby controlling the method of acquisition as each person asked to fill out the survey was given the same instructions.

**Table 3.1 Survey Locations**

Destination	Accommodation	Activity/Attraction	Internet Access
Banff, Alberta	Hotel Lobby Chalet lobby – winter Campground – summer	Ski hill – winter Hiking trail – summer Banff Hot Springs	Wendy’s McDonald’s
Cruise Ship Nassau, Bahamas St. Maartin St. Thomas	Hotel Lobby Cruise Docks On-board Disney Magic and Carnival Cruise	Cruise	Internet Café on-board

The Banff winter tourists’ surveys were conducted in December 2001, February 2002 and December 2002. Surveys were completed at the base of the ski hill, inside hotel lobbies as well as in Wendy’s and McDonald’s restaurants. Due to the cold and snow respondents were more interested in completing questionnaires inside the facilities rather than outside.

During the summer months 2002 there were more opportunities to conduct surveys outdoors due to the cooperative weather, thereby permitting more diversity in terms of locations and potential activities that the respondents may be engaged in.

The potential for bias in respondents is a recognized possibility due to several uncontrollable circumstances:

- 1) When obtaining permission to conduct surveys, various business owners and managers indicated a concern for their patrons. They did not want the customers to feel pressured to fill out a survey and thus impact their levels of satisfaction with the facility/activity or endeavour they were undertaking. Permission to conduct surveys was granted only on the basis that the surveyor remained as unobtrusive as

possible, customers were not approached directly, and a person asked to participate only after that person had expressed interest.

- 2) The person conducting the surveys is a female, and there is a likelihood that more males may approach to inquire about the survey than females.
- 3) Sunshine Ski Resort has a higher percentage of male participants in down hill skiing/snowboarding, than female (Hakkola 2002 ).

In order to compensate for the potential gender bias, cross-tabulation for gender and Internet use will be performed for each case study, to determine its significance to this research.

The cruise surveys were completed both on-board as well as on the cruise docks. On board the cruise ship, guests entering the lobby areas during various times of day were asked to participate in the surveys. Only those showing an interest by inquiring about the surveys were asked. This was a condition placed upon the researcher by the suppliers.

There was a tendency for a couple or group of people to approach the surveyor and ask about the research, but then quite often it was the female in the party who filled out the survey. When it was noticed that a large proportion of the surveys had been completed by females, and there were very few male respondents, the researcher chose to move to a new location in an attempt balance out the gender proportions. The researcher received permission from the suppliers to re-locate on another floor. In the new location, fewer groups passed by and more single guests approached to fill out the surveys.

On the cruise docks in the ports of call, the researcher stood at the entrance/ exit gang-way with a clip board, and again awaited for interested guests to fill out the survey.

The questionnaire consisted of 4 major sections (Appendix B):



- 1) Novelty-seeking. The International Tourist Role Scale (ITR) was utilized. It is a 20-item standard scale which measures (using a 7-point Likert scale) tourists' international travel preferences based on three novelty-related dimensions (destination, travel services and social contact).
- 2) Internet use. Questions were posed about usage, access and preferences (primarily using a 7-point Likert scale, yes/no options, and several open-ended questions).
- 3) Socio-demographic characteristics
- 4) Stages of travel and use of information sources. Questions were asked pertaining to information source preferences and Internet usage at various stages of travel (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1998) (also using a Likert scale).

From these questionnaires the following topics were addressed:

*Are users satisfied with sites? (Were they able to obtain the information they required?)*  
*What are they using the Internet for?*  
*At what stage of travel do they conduct their information searches?*  
*Are certain tourist types more likely to use the Internet as their information and/or transaction source preference?*

The statistical procedures to be used to answer the above questions were: descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and exploratory factor analysis for ITR scale questions. All relationships that are reported are statistically significant to at least the 0.01 level, unless otherwise indicated.

### 3.3.4 Construct Validity for the ITR Scale

For the International Tourist Role (ITR) scale, factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to ascertain that social contact, destination and travel services are distinct constructs (as per Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). The analyses was undertaken to confirm the existence of these three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 that account

for at least 53% of the total variance (Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). The criterion used to identify and interpret factors was: each item should load 0.50 or greater on one particular factor (Igbaria, Iivari and Marakahh 1995; Teo, Lim and Lai 1999). Ensuring that three distinct constructs result from the ITR Scale will confirm the validity of the measurement tool and allow the scale to be used to examine other variables. More specifically, Internet use among survey respondents was examined in relation to their novelty-seeking preference levels.

### 3.3.5 Comparing Supply and Demand

The final steps of the investigation were to compare the target of suppliers (data collected from interviews and Internet searches) with requirements of users and to explore whether or not the goals of each were being met. Conclusions were then drawn from the data analysis and are presented in Chapter 8.

BANFF WINTER TOURISTS

## 4.0 Case Introduction

This chapter examines Internet use among tourists and tourism suppliers in the Banff, Alberta area during the winter season (Figure 4.0). Following a discussion on supply, an analysis of the tourists' survey responses is presented with a detailed description of the characteristics of the respondents and their general Internet use patterns. Novelty and familiarity preferences of the tourists are then defined to be used as a measurement and comparative tool for the three case study areas in subsequent chapters. The significance and usage of the Internet at various stages of travel are also explored, as well as the importance of various information sources to the respondents' decision-making. These results will be compared with those from Banff summer visitors as well as the results from cruise tourists in chapter 7.

In this case, the majority of the winter tourists surveyed were male (78%), between 20 and 49 years of age, with high family income levels. The main reasons given for their trips to Banff were skiing, snowboarding, conferences, and "weekend getaways". As winter visitors, the bulk of respondents were young adults involved in active recreations that tend to be quite expensive to participate in. As such, it might be expected that they have grown up with computers and have the resources and knowledge to use them.

This group of respondents showed very high levels of Internet use as all (100%) participants utilized the Internet regularly. In addition, it was determined that these respondents were most inclined to be novelty-seekers.

Figure 4.0 Banff National Park Map



(source: adapted from Parks Canada 2002)

## 4.1 Suppliers

Prior to examining the respondents' patterns and use of the Internet in more depth, it is essential to understand what is available on-line for Banff winter tourists to access. It is particularly important to note that there is only one association in Banff which represents all businesses. The Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau has approximately 1,500 business members which include all small businesses, home-based businesses, organizations and entities located within Banff or that have any interest in Banff. There is no Chamber of Commerce or other business organization. Most importantly, all of the members of the Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau are offered Web presence (Internet space) via their Web site.

A preliminary analysis was performed for thirty suppliers chosen to represent various types of winter tourism businesses. An Internet search was performed using three key words "Banff", "Winter" and "Tourism" on two different search engines (Google and MSN). The thirty suppliers were chosen from the results list in the order that they appeared and as they fitted into groups of general information, accommodations, attractions, transportation, events and cultural information. Duplicates were eliminated and each site was accessed to determine the level of functionality. Following this, all thirty suppliers were sent a standard e-mail seeking their interest in participating in an interview. Twelve suppliers agreed to a personal interview, six answered questions on-line and the remaining twelve preferred an informal telephone discussion. Two standard questions were posed: 1) "What is your main objective or goal for marketing your business on the Internet?" and 2) "How do you gauge/determine the success of marketing via the Internet?" Although no suggestions were offered for answers, the responses were very similar and can be categorized according to key phrases. A summary of the suppliers' answers, organized in accordance with the pre-test results, and including any new or

different key phrases, is presented in Table 4.1. Out of the thirty suppliers, only one had a definitive answer for question 1. The Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau indicated that the primary objective for their Web site “is to facilitate information retrieval”. Answers for question two varied according to the capabilities of that supplier’s Web site. Of the suppliers whose Web sites could perform reservations or monetary transactions, success was gauged by the number of bookings on-line. Many of the suppliers whose sites did not have these capabilities suggested that they were unsure of the results or how to obtain them. Therefore, although respondents must have felt that there would be benefits to having a Web presence, otherwise they would have not done so, most were unclear about what might be achieved.

**Table 4.1 Supplier’s Internet objectives/success determinants**

Supplier Type	Objectives		Success Determinants				
	unsure	As an information source	Receive bookings on-line	Number of hits	Get phone calls	e-mail load is reduced	unsure
Accommodation	17		12	2	2		1
Transportation	2		2				
General Information	4	1		4		1	
Events	3			3			
Cultural	1			1			
Attractions	2			2			
Total	29	1	14	12	2	1	1

## 4.2 Tourist Respondent Characteristics

Prospective respondents were intercepted in three locations in Banff National Park during the winter tourism season 2001/2002. The first place was on the lower floor of the Wolf-Bear Mall in the centre of town. The second location was in front of the McDonald’s and Wendy’s restaurants as there are computers which have Internet access available at these restaurants. Their close proximity to each other enabled the interviewer to take an ideal

position between them. The third location was the base area of Sunshine Ski Resort. Although all hotels, restaurants and ski area suppliers that were contacted for permission to conduct surveys on their premises were interested in the study, they all had similar concerns regarding the intrusiveness of asking their guests to fill out surveys. In an effort to comply with the suppliers' concerns, people who appeared to be uninterested or attempted to avoid researchers bearing clipboards were not approached. A total of 211 people were asked to fill out the survey. Seven people chose not to fill out the questionnaire due to their time constraints. Two questionnaires were later excluded from the study as they were incomplete. Many of the respondents initiated discussion with the researcher after filling out the surveys and their comments were noted on the back of the questionnaires with their permission.

The demographic characteristics of the 202 usable respondents are presented in Table 4.2.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Australia	8	3.9
Canada	118	58.4
China	7	3.5
England	16	7.9
Germany	9	4.5
New Zealand	2	1
USA	42	20.8
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	44	21.8
Male	158	78.2
<i>Age</i>		
15-20	0	0
21-30	56	27.7
31-39	80	39.6
40-49	48	23.8
50-59	12	5.9
60-69	6	3.0
70+	0	0

The majority of respondents were males (78.2%). Just under 40% (39.6%) were between the ages of 30 and 39 years. There were no respondents under the age of 21, nor were there any over the age of 70. More than half (58.4%) of the respondents indicated Canada as their home, while just under a quarter 20.8% were from the U.S.A. The third most frequent country of origin was England (7.9%) and the fourth was Germany (4.5%). Over three-quarters (75.2%) of the respondents suggested that they used the Internet on a daily basis and a further 20.8% used the Internet more than once per week.

The Internet use questions which asked respondents to use a rating scale of 1 to 7 resulted in the frequencies found in Table 4.3. Internet use questions using simple yes/no responses are found in Table 4. 4. While all (100%) of the respondents answered ‘yes’ to the question “Do you use the Internet?”, there were 2 respondents indicating ‘never’ when asked “How often do you use the Internet?”, indicating perhaps that “Do you” is interpreted by some to mean the same as “Have you ever” when they are answering questions. In addition, “never” may be used by respondents to indicate “not any longer”,

**Table 4.3 Scaled responses of Internet use**

	Never		Occasionally			Daily/Frequently	
	← 1	2	3	4	5	6	→ 7
	<i>Frequency of scores</i>						
How often do you use the Internet?	2	0	6	0	4	38	152
Likelihood of accessing travel or destination Web site when NOT in market to travel?	5	39	26	16	30	78	8
Likelihood of searching for information on Internet?	0	0	8	0	27	55	114
Likelihood of reserving travel plans?	36	14	10	6	40	78	18
Likelihood of paying for travel-related products on –line?	40	18	5	13	79	31	16
Likelihood of using Internet while on a trip?	14	37	33	2	29	77	10
Likelihood of visiting a Web site related to past trip?	0	34	18	26	86	36	2



implying that although they may have performed the activity in the past, they do not at present. Regardless, it is evident that essentially all those interviewed were Internet users.

All (100%) of the respondents answered that they use the Internet to gather travel information before making final travel plans. When it came to reserving travel arrangements via the Internet, the proportion dropped to 76%. A further drop was noticed when respondents were asked about actual purchases via the Internet. Nevertheless, approximately two-thirds (68.3%) of the respondents had purchased a travel-related product through the Internet.

**Table 4.4 Internet use responses via Yes/No**

Question	Yes		No	
	#	%	#	%
Do you use the Internet?	<b>202</b>	100%		
Have you ever linked to a travel-related web site when you were not in the market to travel?	<b>200</b>	99%	<b>2</b>	1%
Have you ever used the Internet to gather travel information before making your final travel plans?	<b>202</b>	100%		
Have you ever used the Internet to reserve your travel arrangements?	<b>152</b>	75.2%	<b>50</b>	24.8%
Have you ever purchased a travel-related product through the Internet?	<b>138</b>	68.3%	<b>64</b>	31.7%
Have you ever used the Internet while on a trip?	<b>174</b>	86.1%	<b>28</b>	13.9%
Have you ever visited a Web site related to a past trip?	<b>160</b>	79.2%	<b>42</b>	20.8%

On the scaled responses, 67% of the respondents indicated a strong likelihood that they would access travel information using the Internet even when they were not in the market to travel. However, 99% indicated on the yes/no responses that they had actually linked to a travel-related Web site when they had no intention to take a trip. The difference suggests that although the conscious intent to search for travel information may not be present, the actions of the respondents reveal that they do perform searches for travel information nevertheless.

Another difference was noted with the scaled responses to purchase travel-related products on-line, whereby 80% of the respondents indicated a likelihood that they would pay for products via the Internet, yet only 68% had actually completed a purchase on-line.

Accommodations were the most frequently purchased products representing 59.4% of all purchases made on the Internet. One respondent suggested:

*“When you try and reserve a hotel on-line they always ask for your credit card, so if you want to reserve it you are kind of forced to pay for it as well. But the car rental companies let you reserve the cars without requesting payment right away. So I’ve probably rented more cars than hotels more times on the Internet, but that doesn’t really count for a purchase”.*

Similar opinions were voiced by several other respondents:

*“I’m more inclined to reserve travel on the Internet, but I don’t like to put my credit card through so if they ask me my number I usually don’t bother reserving it. I’ll call them [on a phone] if I’m really interested in a particular one, or I’ll look for another where I can reserve without paying”*

and, *“I just like to check out the prices, I’ll pay when I get there”.* The types of travel purchases made by the respondents are summarized in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Type of travel purchases made in past**

Type of product	Frequency	Percent of responses
Airline Travel	98	48.5
Car Rental	40	19.8
Accommodation	120	59.4
Attraction Tickets	46	22.8
Guided Tours	0	0
Event Tickets	20	9.9
Activity Booking	4	2.0

(note: respondents could indicate more than one type of purchase)

Airline travel was purchased the second most often with almost half (48.5%) of the purchases made. Attraction tickets and car rentals had been purchased by almost one-quarter (22.8%).

**Table 4.6 Banff winter ITR responses**

Rating Scale  
1=Strongly Agree StronglyDisagree-7

Questions	Percentage of responses (%)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when travelling in another country.	22	16	3	2	15	17	25
2. I prefer to travel to countries where the people are of different ethnic group from mine.	23	32	17	25	2	1	0
3. I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same tourist infrastructure (such as highways, water supply, sewer, electric power, and communications systems) as in my country.	1	11	13	31	18	15	11
4. I prefer not to associate with the local people when travelling in a foreign country.	47	37	10	6	0	0	0
5. I prefer to seek the excitement of complete novelty by engaging in direct contact with a variety of new and different people.	27	35	13	16	6	3	0
6. I prefer to travel to countries where the culture is different from mine.	28	18	52	0	2	0	0
7. I prefer to make no arrangements through travel agencies before travelling to a foreign country.	19	11	13	13	2	24	18
8. I prefer to travel to countries with well-developed travel industries.	6	22	12	28	11	12	9
9. I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when travelling in a foreign country.	12	4	20	5	17	23	19
10. I prefer to travel to countries where there are restaurants familiar to me.	14	33	33	3	2	6	9
11. I prefer not to stay in international hotel chains when travelling in another country.	2	26	7	19	27	10	9
12. If I find a place that particularly pleases me, I may stop there long enough for social involvement in the life of the place to occur.	28	33	30	0	5	4	0
13. I put high priority on familiarity when thinking of travel destinations.	23	25	26	9	8	9	0
14. I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same transportation system as in my country.	15	16	14	11	18	24	2
15. I prefer to be on a guided tour when travelling in a foreign country.	34	19	4	18	12	13	0
16. I prefer to have little personal contact with the local people when travelling in another country.	27	28	21	7	0	8	9
17. I prefer to live the way the people I visit live by sharing their shelter, food, and customs during my stay.	10	17	29	15	20	6	3
18. I prefer to have travel agencies take complete care of me, from beginning to end, when travelling in another country.	30	25	19	15	0	5	6
19. I prefer to travel to countries that are not popular tourist destinations.	16	14	21	20	19	10	0
20. I prefer to make friends with the local people when travelling in another country.	29	27	17	22	2	3	0

### 4.3 ITR Scale

The first page of the survey included questions from the International Tourist Role (ITR) scale. This 20-item scale developed by Mo (1991) measures preferences for novelty or familiarity when travelling. Table 4.6 lists the questions and summarizes the responses, shown as percentages. The ITR scale is based on multidimensional constructs which have been shown to be more reliable than single-item measures (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992),

The scale measures novelty-seeking behaviour for three factors: destination preferences, social contact (preferences for contact with local people at a destination) and travel services (such as preferences for use of travel agents or guided tours). Similar to the conceptual dimensions derived from Cohen (1972), these three dimensions were also validated by Jiang (2000). Factor analysis was the primary method of extracting the dimensions in these former studies and, thus, was utilized here for consistency. The initial principal component analysis however, did not obtain three factors as expected. Four

**Table 4.7 Rotated component matrix**

	1	2	3	4
Variable1	.396	.176	.770	.164
Variable2	-.322	.558	-.192	.601
Variable3	.740	-.008	.113	.268
Variable4	.265	.574	-.523	-.435
Variable5	-.008	.861	.189	-.101
Variable6	.002	.785	.005	.003
Variable7	.380	-.009	.770	.006
Variable8	.736	-.002	.449	.261
Variable9	.225	-.271	.184	.838
Variable10	.788	-.281	.414	.002
Variable11	.708	.142	.398	-.158
Variable12	-.009	.714	.287	-.002
Variable13	.898	-.179	.106	.002
Variable14	.758	-.181	-.233	-.007
Variable15	.834	.009	.008	-.197
Variable16	.906	-.111	-.001	.003
Variable17	-.269	.840	-.006	.008
Variable18	-.004	.322	.668	-.006
Variable19	.746	.193	.431	.009
Variable20	.003	.898	-.009	-.149

components were clearly extracted with the lowest factor loading at .523, considerably higher than the critical factor loading threshold (.326) in Jiang’s study, although the sample size differed significantly. According to Stevens (1986), the critical values for a correlation coefficient with a sample size of 200 would be .182, translating to a factor loading threshold of approximately .375. A re-evaluation of the original validation study (Jiang 1995) found that, due to low factor loadings (less than .326) on several variables, three items were removed from their scale. Questions 2, 4 and 11 did not seem to fit in Jiang’s pattern matrix and were subsequently dropped from their analysis. Their final scale also resulted in a further item (19) being dropped leaving a “New 3-Factor Solution” with only 16-items in the ITR Scale.

In the present study, all 20 items loaded significantly but resulted in four definite components (Table 4.8). In an attempt to refine the components, a rotated analysis was

**Table 4.8 Pattern matrix of the 3-factor solution**

Question	1	2	3
1	.408	.191	.770
4	.289	.585	.636
7	.395	-.009	.775
18	-.003	.357	.605
2	-.390	.500	-.008
5	-.006	.869	.152
6	.002	.782	.005
12	-.008	.725	.262
17	-.271	.834	-.006
20	.005	.912	-.008
3	.710	-.114	.191
8	.722	-.003	.501
10	.798	-.272	.393
11	.735	.159	.332
13	.896	-.184	.100
14	.753	-.189	-.251
15	.851	.002	.002
16	.899	-.120	-.002
19	.748	.190	.437

performed. Based on a Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization, the component analysis again revealed four distinct components. The questions were then analysed to determine which ones loaded into the fourth category and they were compared with those from Jiang's original study.

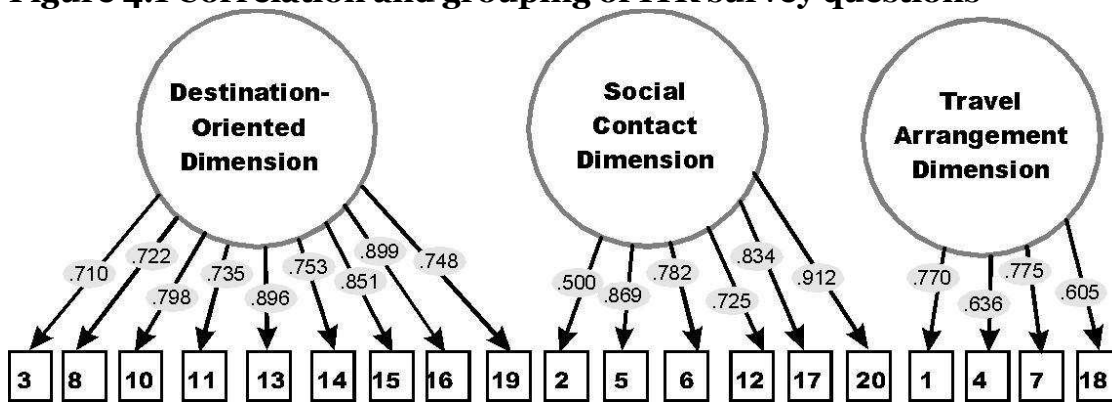
This matrix revealed only variables 2 and 9 loading in the fourth category, although the loading for variable 2 is fairly close in value in both components 2 and 4, indicating that it may be equally relevant in both. Interestingly, variable 9 ("I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when traveling in a foreign country") merely rewords variable 1

("I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when traveling in another country") yet produces significant differences in terms of loadings. Perhaps the term 'route' in item 9 suggests 'destination choice' to people as opposed to 'travel arrangement' which was the original intention of the wording. Further analysis revealed that once item 9 was removed completely, 3 distinct components were extracted to reveal a similar result to Jiang's . The resulting correlations of the 19 questions are presented in Table 4.8 listed as they correspond with one particular component.

Utilizing the 19-item ITR scale allowed familiarity/novelty preferences to be interpreted in the three separate areas, thereby adopting Jiang's categories: social contact, travel services and destination (Figure 4.1).

From the first page of the survey, each of the 20 numbered questions was assigned to a group based on its correlation with a related area as shown above. Each respondent can then be grouped according to his/her novelty or familiarity preferences in these three dimensions and further variables comparisons can be undertaken between and among the groups. With this method, the researcher is able to compare information source usage on

**Figure 4.1 Correlation and grouping of ITR survey questions**



a case (or location) basis as well as in terms of novelty/familiarity preferences.

In the next step, the responses from the surveys were recoded such that an answer of 1 indicated the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicated the highest preference for familiarity, for all 19 questions. Recoding the responses in this manner allowed more straightforward interpretation of the results. A summary of the responses is found in Table 4.9 organized by item and grouped into the three dimensions. The frequency of scores indicates a high preponderance for novelty-seeking in all three dimensions. The respondents have distinct preferences for novelty-seeking in the Social Contact dimension (questions 2,6,12,17,20). Over three-quarters (77.4%) of the respondents favoured social interaction and experiencing new cultures, while only 9.6% preferred limited contact with local people while traveling.

With questions 1,4,7,9,18 representing the travel services dimension, just over half (50.5%) of the respondents chose an answer of 1 or 2 indicating very high preference for novelty in their travel arrangements. One respondent commented:

*“I book concrete plane reservations to get to the general area, but I like the thrill of trying to [hitch]hike to the ski hill without all that car rental crap or waiting forever for shuttles”.*

Several other respondents provided similar comments regarding setting up pre-arranged “long haul” travel plans, but did not like to have set plans once they arrived. Conversely, over one-quarter (28%) preferred very high familiarity (a choice of 6 or 7) in their travel arrangement preferences. One person remarked:

*“I pay a hefty price tag for ski holidays so I don’t want to be bothered with every detail, let them shuttle me around in a nice comfy bus, pointing out where to go, what to see, where to eat, that’s why I pay for the complete deals: no worries, I know what I’m getting”.*

Item	Frequency of Scores						
	Novelty ←						→ Familiarity
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>1</b>	44	32	6	4	30	34	52
<b>4</b>	94	74	20	14	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	38	24	26	26	4	48	36
<b>9</b>	24	8	42	10	34	46	38
<b>18</b>	60	52	38	30	0	10	12
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>2</b>	46	64	34	50	6	2	0
<b>5</b>	54	72	26	32	12	6	0
<b>6</b>	56	38	104	0	4	0	0
<b>12</b>	56	68	60	0	10	8	0
<b>17</b>	20	34	58	32	40	12	6
<b>20</b>	58	56	34	44	4	6	0
<b>Total Social Contact</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	2	24	26	62	36	30	22
<b>8</b>	12	44	24	56	24	24	18
<b>10</b>	28	66	66	6	4	12	20
<b>11</b>	4	54	14	38	54	20	18
<b>13</b>	48	50	52	18	16	18	0
<b>14</b>	30	32	30	22	36	48	4
<b>15</b>	68	38	8	36	24	28	0
<b>16</b>	56	56	42	14	0	16	18
<b>19</b>	32	28	42	40	38	22	0
<b>Total Destination</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100</b>

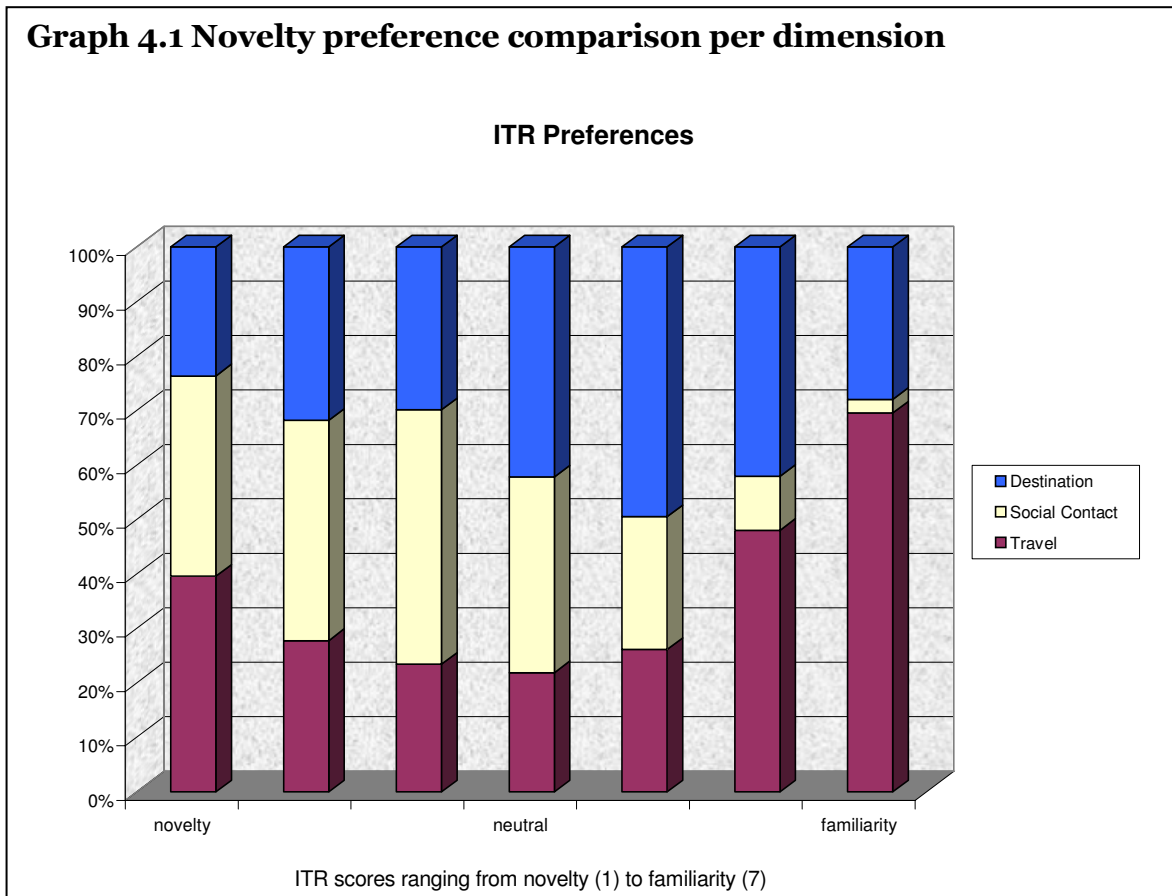
Respondents were most often close to either pole (familiarity or novelty), with fewer taking a neutral position in the middle.



The destination dimension also revealed a split in preferences, with only a slightly higher preponderance for novelty in destination choices. As one respondent indicated: *“Skiing is extreme in itself, I don’t need to be unfamiliar with the surroundings to enjoy the ‘thrill’ of travel like some people do”*.

Most respondents prefer novelty in terms of restaurants, culture, and social involvement with local people. Recalling that nearly 60% of the respondents were domestic tourists, it stands to reason that this would indeed be the case. Familiarity was mostly sought with transportation systems and, although the vast majority of people answered that they do not put high priority on familiarity when travelling, more than half indicated that they prefer to make definite arrangements prior to their travels. When the results are graphed using the percentages of responses per dimension, there is strong overall preference

**Graph 4.1 Novelty preference comparison per dimension**



towards novelty (score of 1) in the social contact dimension, and a strong preference for familiarity (score of 7) in the travel arrangements dimension (Graph 4.1).

## 4.4 Information Sources

The respondents were also asked to indicate all of the information sources that they use when planning a trip (Table 4.10). The Internet was cited most frequently with 100% of respondents utilizing this source. More than three-quarters (78.2%) also considered friends/word of mouth to be an important information source. Television and magazines were mentioned by over half (55.4% and 53.5% respectively) of the respondents as being useful when planning a trip, although comments indicated that it was often neither the commercials on TV, nor the advertisements in magazines which were regarded as important information sources. As one respondent explained:

*“I think these new travel shows have shown me more about the places I want to go than any brochure ever could. And, they show me the bad stuff too, which you never hear from travel agents”.*

Another respondent offered some insights into her choice for magazines:

*“We actually collect them [ski magazines], we have a space in our bookshelf and when we want to go somewhere, we just check out what the feature destinations were for the last few ski seasons and choose one based on their comments. Then we hit the Internet to fine tune our plans”.*

This suggests that, indeed, different information sources are used at different stages of decision making and travel planning.

In Table 4.10 all information sources that a respondent would use when planning travel are summarized. However, when asked to consider the value of their information sources and choose only that which is considered their most important or useful, and the one they felt to be of least importance, the results differed significantly. Table 4.11 indicates which

Information sources	Frequency	Percent
Friends	158	78.2%
TV	112	55.4%
Internet	202	100%
Travel agent	90	44.6%
Brochure	96	47.5%
Books	90	44.6%
Travel catalogue	96	47.5%
Magazine	104	53.5%
Guidebook	74	36.6%
Visitor guide	42	20.8%

information source the respondents felt to be most important to their decision making, and Table 4.12 summarizes the responses concerning the information source viewed as being the least beneficial.

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends	16	7.9
TV	0	
Internet	140	69.2
Travel agent	18	8.9
Brochure	10	5.0
Books	0	
Travel Catalogue	8	4.0
Magazine	10	5.0
Guidebook	0	
Visitor Guide	0	
Total	202	100%

The Internet was overwhelmingly the most important information source chosen by over two-thirds (69.2%) of the respondents. Although all media options were utilized as information sources, when asked to choose only the one most important, neither television, nor books, visitor guides, nor guide books were selected. In addition, travel agents, friends, magazines and travel catalogues lagged well behind the Internet in terms of their choice as the most important information source.

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends	0	
TV	26	12.9
Internet	0	
Travel Agent	46	22.8
Brochure	28	13.9
Books	22	10.9
Travel Catalogue	12	5.9
Magazine	6	3.0
Guidebook	42	20.8
Visitor Guide	20	9.9
Total	202	100%

The least important information source to almost a quarter of the respondents was a travel agent (22.8%). Following close behind were guidebooks, with 20.8% of respondents citing them as unimportant. The Internet and friends were the only sources NOT cited by any respondent as their least important. One skier noted:

*“I get what I want, when I want it, from the Internet. That was easy choosing my most important. The least important is really hard because after the Internet they are all about the same. If I can’t find it on the Internet, then I have to check the other sources – so I wouldn’t say any one is unimportant to me”.*

Overall, the respondents felt that the Internet was their most valuable tool when making travel decisions, but it was also apparent that the other information sources were considered important as well.

Tables 4.13, 4.14 and 4. 15 cross-tabulate the ITR responses for each dimension (travel arrangement, social contact and destination) with their preferred information source. A score of 1 indicates the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicates the highest preference for familiarity. The figures represent percentage of respondents preferred information source. Respondents who scored extremely high in novelty preferences (ITR Score of 1) also cited the most frequent Internet use. This was true for all three dimensions: travel services, social contact, and destination preferences.

However, respondents scoring 2 for novelty preferences were most likely to consult a wide variety of information sources. Those respondents who preferred familiarity (ITR score of 7) tended to use the fewest sources of information and the majority of these relied on the Internet and travel agents. Again this was true for all three dimensions.

**Table 4.13 Travel services dimension**

ITR Score	Brochures	Friends	Internet	Magazine	TV	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	2.5	2.7	20.8	2.2			1.0	29.2
2	1.2	1.7	16.8	0.5	0.2	2.0		22.5
3			7.9	0.5	0.5	2.2		11.1
4		0.5	8.2	0.5				9.2
5			3.2	0.5	0.2	0.2		4.2
6	1.2	0.7	5.2	0.7		3.5		11.4
7		2.2	7.2				3.0	12.4

**Table 4.14 Social contact dimension**

ITR Score	Brochures	Friends	Internet	Magazines	TV	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	0.7	2.0	21.1					23.8
2	3.3	1.8	14.9	0.5	0.3	6.1		26.9
3	0.8	2.3	16.7	3.8	0.1	1.3	2.0	27.0
4		0.7	11.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.7	13.2
5		1.2	3.8		0.2		1.3	6.4
6			2.1	0.3	0.2	0.1		2.6
7								

**Table 4.15 Destination dimension**

ITR Score	Brochures	Friends	Internet	Magazines	TV	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1		2.0	11.2	0.3			1.8	15.3
2	2.8	2.3	14.1	2.3	0.2	0.2		21.8
3		1.0	12.5	1.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	16.4
4	0.6	1.2	12.3	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.4	15.5
5	0.7	1.4	6.9	0.3	0.1	2.3	1.3	13.1
6	1.1	0.2	5.9			5.4		12.7
7			5.1			0.1		5.2

Overall, the respondents consulted an average of 5.3 information sources when planning travel.

## 4.5 Stages of Travel

The stages of travel section in the survey asked respondents to rate the level of importance of various Internet features at different stages of travel, beginning when they have no intention to take a trip, to pre-trip planning, finalizing choices, purchasing travel and, finally, while on a trip.

Table 4.16 summarizes the response ratings of the level of importance of having various types of information available to them on the Internet at each trip decision stage. Respondents were asked to rate the level of importance from 1 to 7, whereby 1 is “very important” and 7 is “not important”. For the 202 respondents the scores were totaled and possible responses ranged from 2002 to 1414. These scores were categorized into groups of the importance the respondents placed on the Internet for their decision making. A score of 202-404 being extremely important, 405-605 very important, 606-1010 somewhat important, 1011-1211 not very important, and 1212 – 1414 not important at all. Therefore, lower scores signify a higher level of importance that the respondents place on a feature.

**Table 4.16 Importance of information on the Internet at various stages of travel**

Type of information	Stages of travel					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
	<b>No intention to travel</b>	<b>Pre-planning</b>	<b>Finalizing</b>	<b>Purchasing</b>	<b>While travelling</b>	Overall Totals
General Information About a Destination	526	298	380	472	650	2326
Accommodation	758	466	370	492	776	2862
Attractions	748	480	478	606	746	3058
Transportation	784	490	404	506	788	2972
Events	836	582	492	640	774	3324
Cultural Information	842	520	502	652	736	3252
Other Web Site Links	858	526	524	732	906	3546
Categories of Types of Travel	784	648	630	776	926	3764
Totals	6136	4010	3780	4876	6302	

As a tourist moves through the stages of travel from the point where they have no intention to travel to actually being on a trip, five phases are experienced. During each stage people seek different types and amounts of information from a variety of sources. Information that is available on the Internet can be grouped into eight categories: general information about a destination, accommodation, attractions, transportation, events, cultural information, other Web site links, and categories or types of travel (such as ecotourism, golf or skiing, etc.). Overall the respondents indicated that they consider it important to have travel related information available on the Internet at all times, even when they may not be in the market to take a trip. The average score for each grouping remained consistently below 1010 (with the highest scoring 926) demonstrating that each type of information is considered at least 'somewhat important' to those surveyed at every stage of travel. General information about a destination scores the lowest which translates into 'very important', followed closely by accommodation and transportation. The remaining types of information are averaged to be 'somewhat important' and listed in order of preference are attractions, cultural information, events, links and categories of travel.

During the first stage of travel, when there is no intention to take a trip, the respondents still felt it was important to have certain information available on the Internet. General information about a destination was considered to be very important at this stage, followed by attractions. Offering other links from Web site to Web site was considered the least important during this stage.

The pre-planning stage sees general information becoming much more significant to the respondents (evidenced by the low scoring), more so than at any of the other stages of travel. Information on attractions is also considered to be most important at this stage. When the respondents are finalizing their travel plans, accommodation information becomes the primary concern. It is also during this stage that transportation information



becomes the most important. In addition, events, cultural information, Web links and categorical information are all deemed to be essential during this finalizing stage. When purchasing travel, the relative importance of all information available on the Internet declines. A further drop is noticed while on a trip.

## 4.6 Case Summary

In summary, the Banff winter respondents were found to all use the Internet. Less than 5% indicated occasional use while the remaining 95% regularly accessed the Internet. The respondents deemed general information to be the most important to have available to them on the Internet. Even during the purchasing stage, the respondents felt that general information was more important than information on accommodation, followed by transportation. The actual purchases that the respondents indicated were made on-line supports this finding to some degree. Accommodation was most often purchased, followed by airline travel and car rental (transportation). Of the 30 suppliers interviewed, the accommodation sector gauged a successful Web site by the number of bookings received, as did the transportation businesses.

This group of respondents scored high overall in terms of novelty-seeking preferences. In the social contact dimension, the majority (50.7%) of responses scored 1 or 2. Similarly, over half (51.7%) of the respondents scored 1 or 2 in travel services, slightly fewer (47.1%) were found to score 1 or 2 in the destination dimension. As the verbal comments indicated, respondents engaging in 'extreme sports' such as skiing and snowboarding prefer familiar destinations.

The information sources which were consulted the most when planning a trip included: Internet, brochures, friends, travel agents, travel catalogues, magazines and TV. It was noted by several respondents that the TV, as a marketing tool, was most effective to them

in the form of travel shows. Perception of a destination was formed prior to the actual search for information when a travel show is watched and, from the newly acquired image the respondents had of a place, they would then seek further information if interested. The Internet was most often used to finalize travel plans, or for general information once a trip had been decided on. Magazines, on the other hand, were often collected and kept as souvenirs and as the 'end product' of a trip, rather than being used pre-trip as information sources. Overall, the respondents used an average of 5.3 sources of information when planning a trip.

It was determined that the novelty-seekers among the Banff winter respondents were most inclined to utilize the Internet in addition to consulting the most amount of information sources (average of 7.2 sources) among the Banff winter respondents. Familiarity-seekers in general used fewer sources of information when planning a trip (3.1 sources) and tended to seek help mainly from travel agents as well as the Internet.

The stages of travel questions from the survey revealed that most respondents used the Internet mainly for general information throughout all five stages. However, when finalizing trip plans and reserving travel-related products, accommodation information was rated as the most important. The Internet was found to be predominantly used to finalize travel plans once preliminary decisions had been made regarding destination choice and transportation.

BANFF SUMMER TOURISTS

## 5.0 Case Introduction

It is important to conduct a seasonal comparison between winter and summer visitors to Banff as there will be differences among the clientele, primary activities and also the suppliers. This chapter examines Internet use among tourists and tourism suppliers in the Banff, Alberta area during the summer season. While many of the summer visitors will have been attracted to Banff by the existence of a national park, many will not have ventured far from the area. The climate of the summer season affords a wider range of activities for a wider range of people than the winter season in Banff. As such, the visitors and possible respondents are expected to be a more heterogeneous group in age, activities, education and access to and familiarity with computers, than the winter group. A comparison will then be made in chapter 7 examining the overall seasonality, clientele, activity and supply differences and similarities between the case studies.

The majority of respondents in this case were male (61.1%) and from Canada (48.1%), although visitors from the U.S. constituted a large percentage (35.4%) as well. Just over one quarter of the respondents were between 30 and 39 years of age, and an almost equal numbers of respondents were between 60 and 69 years of age, with a wide diversity of yearly income levels. The main reasons for their trip to Banff in the summer were cited as: hiking, camping, conferences, health/spa, mountains, family holiday, weekend getaway, caravan trip and group tours. More than three-quarters indicated regular Internet use, although less than half (47%) had reserved their travel plans on-line and even less (42%) had ever conducted an on-line purchase.

This group of respondents had a higher variability among their novelty-seeking scores, with a split between those preferring familiar cultures and having little contact with local people in the host communities, and those preferring to integrate with the local community and experience new cultures. As a destination choice, most of the respondents preferred new and different places and were unlikely to pre-plan or pre-book fixed itineraries.

From the supply perspective, many of the summer businesses had no pre-set objectives or goals associated with their Web site presence. However, there was considerable overlap with the winter suppliers (24 of the 30 were the same for both seasons), so the goals for the Web sites would remain unchanged. Most had never considered the effectiveness of marketing their establishments or products via Internet, beyond their assumption that merely having a presence on the Internet is sufficient to attract the 'on-line' market.

## 5.1 Suppliers

Similar to the process of examining the on-line supply of Internet information for winter tourism in Banff, it is necessary to explore the Internet resources that are available on-line for summer tourists. An Internet search was performed using three key words "Banff", "Summer" and "Tourism" on two different search engines (Google and MSN). The first thirty suppliers were chosen from the results list in the order that they appeared and as they fitted into groups of general information, accommodations, attractions, transportation, events and cultural information. Since many of the sites were the same as those generated in the winter season (24 of the 30), only those suppliers which had not been previously contacted were sent an e-mail requesting their participation in the study. A seventh category was also added to the list due to one supplier offering so many tourism-related services that they would be best described as a tour company. The same two questions were posed: 1) "What is your main objective or goal for marketing your business

on the Internet?” and 2) “How do you gauge/determine the success of marketing via the Internet?” Again there were no suggestions offered for answers, but many of the responses were similar, thereby allowing categorization according to key phrases. A summary of the suppliers’ answers is presented in Table 5.1. There were two suppliers that gauged success by utilizing more than one determinant; in both cases the suppliers monitored on-line bookings as well as number of hits to their Web site. Several suppliers also referred to their ‘Web Master’ (the person/company that created their Web site) noting that the control of their site was performed by a ‘Web Master’. One supplier explained that he himself “*did not really know how to gauge success, but the Web Master sends us reports of where the hits came from*”. In these cases, number of hits was recorded as their primary success determinant.

**Table 5.1 Supplier’s Internet objectives/success determinants**

Supplier Type	Objectives		Success Determinants				
	unsure	As an information source	Receive bookings on-line	Number of hits	Get phone calls	e-mail load is reduced	unsure
Accommodation	14		9	2	2		1
Transportation	2		2				
General Information	4	1		4		1	
Events	5		1	2	2		1
Cultural	1			1			
Attractions	2			2			
Tour Company		1	1	1			
Total	28	2	13	12	4	1	2

When comparing the supplier’s main objectives for using the Internet to market their product, it is evident that most did not have any pre-set goals. After the suppliers had had a chance to think more about the question, many came back and concluded that the sites were designed “*because we felt we had to keep up with other businesses*”. So, even though they did not consciously think about what might be achieved with a Web site prior to designing one, the

suppliers' motivations to have Internet presence were very similar: competition and technological advancement. The marketing processes whereby a target would be set, perhaps alternative media might be explored and a budget allocated to finance the endeavours (Kotler 2003) were not a priority or even considered. It became clear that no matter what the motivation or main marketing goal was, whether pre-defined consciously or undefined, the result was still the same – they did design a Web page, or had one designed for them.

Question 2, “How do you gauge/determine the success of marketing via the Internet?” was designed to permit comparison of objectives with the success determinants. The suppliers generally answered this question with greater confidence than the first one and could provide some marker which they felt measured their Web site success. Only two of the businesses remained uncertain.

By and large, even though 93% of the Banff summer suppliers did not have clear objectives when establishing their sites, they were comfortable with the results they were receiving.

## 5.2 Respondent's Characteristics

Potential respondents were intercepted in various locations throughout Banff National Park during the summer tourism season 2002; the junction between Banff Hot Springs, the base of the Gondola ride and hiking trail, Bow River Falls, Tunnel Mountain campground, on the main street between the McDonald's and Wendy's restaurants, various hiking trail bases, and the Hoodoo Lookout point (Figure 5.1). As was the case with the winter tourists, many of the respondents initiated discussion with the researcher after filling out the surveys and their comments were noted on the back of the questionnaires with their permission. A total of 638 people were asked to fill out the survey. Several people from a bus tour were approached that were not fluent in English, however the tour



operator acted as a translator and filled out the surveys on their behalf. Three additional people refused to participate because of language barriers and one person because of time constraints. The demographic characteristics of the resulting 632 respondents are presented in Table 5.2.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Canada	304	48.1
USA	224	35.4
Germany	42	6.6
England	20	3.2
Australia	13	2.1
France	11	1.8
Wales	9	1.4
Japan	9	1.4
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	246	38.9
Male	386	61.1
<i>Age</i>		
15-20	22	3.5
21-30	94	14.9
31-39	175	27.7
40-49	43	6.8
50-59	104	16.5
60-69	151	23.9
70+	43	6.8

The majority (61.1%) of respondents were male. There was a wide range of ages among the respondents from 15 to over 70 years of age. The largest percentages were found in the 31 to 39 years of age group (28%) and the 60 to 69 years of age group (24%). Less than half (48%) of the respondents lived in Canada while over one-third (35.4%) were from the United States. The third most frequent country of origin was Germany (6.6%) followed by England, Australia, France, Wales and Japan. Three-quarters (74.8%) of the respondents regularly use the Internet.



In Table 5.3 the scaled responses to Internet use are found, and Table 5.4 summarizes the answers to questions using simple yes/no responses.

**Table 5.3 Scaled responses of Internet use** (n=632)

	Never		Occasionally			Daily/Frequently	
	← 1	2	3	4	5	6	→ 7
	<i>Frequency of scores</i>						
How often do you use the Internet?	22	0	21	33	55	128	236
Likelihood of accessing travel or destination Web site when NOT in market to travel?	55	120	33	44	119	64	71
Likelihood of searching for information on Internet?	44	54	0	53	57	95	203
Likelihood of reserving travel plans?	107	73	22	65	89	110	40
Likelihood of paying for travel-related products on –line?	193	110	21	23	97	45	17
Likelihood of using Internet while on a trip?	120	32	45	44	137	86	42
Likelihood of visiting a Web site related to past trip?	98	75	45	44	94	72	1

Three-quarters (74.8%) of the respondents indicated use of the Internet and almost all of these people (71.4% of all respondents) also suggested that there is a likelihood of accessing travel sites when they are **not** in the market to take a trip. In addition, 63.1% indicated that they would likely reserve travel using the Internet and almost half (49.5%) would purchase travel through the Internet. When asked for a straight yes/no response, only 42.6% of the respondents had actually reserved on-line or completed a purchase by computer. There is a significant difference between intent to reserve or purchase and actually performing a transaction on-line. Apart from this, it is clear that a large proportion of those interviewed utilize the Internet regularly.

**Table 5.4 Internet use responses via Yes/No** (n=632)

Question	Yes		No	
	#	%	#	%
Do you use the Internet?	<b>473</b>	74.8%	<b>159</b>	25.2%
Have you ever linked to a travel-related web site when you were not in the market to travel?	<b>352</b>	55.7%	<b>280</b>	26.1%
Have you ever used the Internet to gather travel information before making your final travel plans?	<b>451</b>	71.4%	<b>181</b>	28.6%
Have you ever used the Internet to reserve your travel arrangements?	<b>269</b>	42.6%	<b>363</b>	57.4%
Have you ever purchased a travel-related product through the Internet?	<b>269</b>	42.6%	<b>363</b>	57.4%
Have you ever used the Internet while on a trip?	<b>342</b>	54.1%	<b>290</b>	45.9%
Have you ever visited a Web site related to a past trip?	<b>276</b>	43.7%	<b>356</b>	56.3%

The types of travel purchases made by the respondents are summarized in Table 5.5. The most frequently purchased product was accommodation with 27.6% of all mentioned purchases made on the Internet. This was closely followed by car rentals with 23.2% of total mentioned purchases made. The 'other' category was chosen by 8.1% of the respondents which was split into a further three categories of purchases: bus tours (1.7%), cruises (6.3%) and train travel (1.7%). Among the respondents that had performed on-line purchases, most had purchased more than one type of product. There was less than 1% who had indicated only one prior purchase, with the average respondent having purchased 3.5 of the mentioned items.

**Table 5.5 Type of travel purchases made in past**

Type of product	Frequency	Percent
Airline Travel	130	16.7
Car Rental	181	23.2
Accommodation	216	27.6
Attraction Tickets	42	5.3
Guided Tours	71	9.1
Event Tickets	29	3.7
Activity Booking	49	6.3
Other	62	8.1

(note: respondents could indicate more than one type of purchase)

Total 100%

Internet use was quite prevalent among the respondents and many looked for the capabilities to reserve and purchase on-line. Many people were frustrated with the more basic Web sites that they had encountered:

*“I use the Internet for everything and when I can’t reserve the accommodations I want, I just find another place that I can reserve on-line”.*

This suggests that the difference between intent to purchase and actually doing so may be determined as much by supply and availability, as reluctance on the part of Internet users to engage in e-commerce.

### 5.3 ITR Scale

The International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale was incorporated into the summer survey to measure preferences for novelty or familiarity when traveling. Table 5.6 summarizes percentages of responses for each question in the scale.

**Table 5.6 Banff summer ITR responses**

Rating Scale  
1=Strongly Agree StronglyDisagree-7

Questions	Percentage of responses (%) n=632						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when travelling in another country.	18	38	9	4	4	11	16
I prefer to travel to countries where the people are of different ethnic group from mine.	38	10	4	15	5	21	7
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same tourist infrastructure (such as highways, water supply, sewer, electric power, and communications systems) as in my country.	5	29	6	7	36	11	6
I prefer not to associate with the local people when travelling in a foreign country.	5	6	6	8	10	42	23
I prefer to seek the excitement of complete novelty by engaging in direct contact with a variety of new and different people.	46	8	5	11	16	13	1
I prefer to travel to countries where the culture is different from mine.	39	9	7	13	15	14	3
I prefer to make no arrangements through travel agencies before travelling to a foreign country.	20	39	9	0	7	17	8
I prefer to travel to countries with well-developed travel industries.	7	23	6	13	38	7	6
I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when travelling in a foreign country.	11	12	6	6	12	39	14
I prefer to travel to countries where there are restaurants familiar to me.	7	23	5	7	37	9	11
I prefer not to stay in international hotel chains when travelling in another country.	10	22	6	13	28	12	9
If I find a place that particularly pleases me, I may stop there long enough for social involvement in the life of the place to occur.	43	6	9	12	14	12	4
I put high priority on familiarity when thinking of travel destinations.	4	21	6	9	38	14	8
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same transportation system as in my country.	5	26	3	7	39	12	8
I prefer to be on a guided tour when travelling in a foreign country.	7	29	0	4	37	12	11
I prefer to have little personal contact with the local people when travelling in another country.	5	23	3	8	36	9	16
I prefer to live the way the people I visit live by sharing their shelter, food, and customs during my stay.	39	2	8	10	3	24	14
I prefer to have travel agencies take complete care of me, from beginning to end, when travelling in another country.	7	10	3	1	11	44	24
I prefer to travel to countries that are not popular tourist destinations.	10	19	34	11	4	8	14
I prefer to make friends with the local people when travelling in another country.	47	8	5	7	3	27	3

Factor analysis was utilized as the primary method of extracting various dimensions from the responses in the ITR scale (as per the winter tourist analysis and following Mo 1991; Jiang 2000). The initial principal components analysis revealed three distinct components and, after performing a Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization, the lowest factor loading was .549, indicating a high communality within the components (Table 5.7). These three components represent the ITR dimensions on which novelty or familiarity preferences can be measured (following Mo, 1991; Jiang, 2000 and Basala, 2001) and are categorized according to: destination preferences, social contact and travel services.

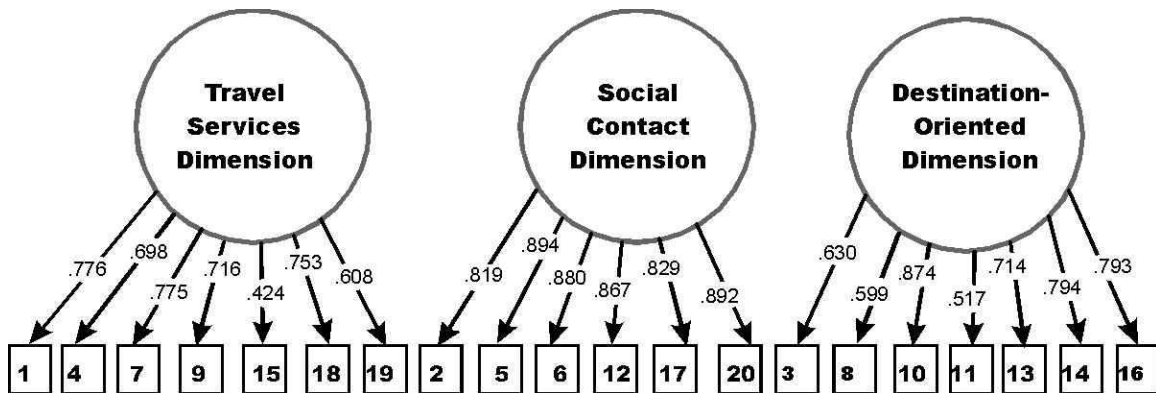
**Table 5.7 Rotated Component Matrix**

	1	2	3
	social contact	destination	travel services
Variable1	.485	.120	.725
Variable2	.831	-.331	.133
Variable3	-.483	.618	-.121
Variable4	-.006	.416	-.722
Variable5	.865	-.368	.103
Variable6	.852	-.347	.183
Variable7	.406	.004	.780
Variable8	-.423	.628	-.162
Variable9	-.212	.194	-.796
Variable10	-.314	.864	-.172
Variable11	-.230	.673	.105
Variable12	.866	-.297	.171
Variable13	-.249	.807	-.002
Variable14	-.346	.816	-.008
Variable15	-.173	.268	.567
Variable16	-.229	.857	-.007
Variable17	.818	-.338	.212
Variable18	-.002	.531	-.686
Variable19	.537	-.133	.549
Variable20	.861	-.377	.009

Each question in the ITR relates best to one of the three components in Table 5.7. The variable which loads highest into one of the three components can be said to relate to that particular dimension. Table 5.8 arranges the questions from the ITR scale into the best fit dimension. The dimensions were defined as travel services, destination choices, and social-cultural preferences originally by Mo (1991), and then further refined by Jiang (2000) to

the categories adopted in this dissertation. As such, questions 1,4,7,9,15,18,19 measure novelty or familiarity preferences for travel services or arrangements. Questions 2, 5, 6, 12, 17 and 20 measure preferences in the social contact dimension and the remaining questions fall into the destination dimension. Figure 5.2 illustrates the extraction levels and communalities for the three dimensions which are considerably higher than the critical threshold of .326 in Jiang’s study (2000).

**Figure 5.2 Correlation and grouping of ITR survey questions**



The responses to the first twenty questions of the survey (the ITR portion) were then recoded such that an answer of 1 indicated the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicated the highest preference for familiarity. Recoding the responses in this manner allows for a more straightforward interpretation of the results. A summary of the responses is found in Table 5.8 organized by question and grouped into the three dimensions. Overall, there is a higher preponderance for novelty-seeking in terms of the destination choices, as evidenced by a large number of lower values (1, 2 or 3). The social contact answers are split between either high novelty preferences or high familiarity preferences with few respondents neutral on this matter as evidenced by the lower middle number responses. Respondents also preferred novelty for their travel services, indicating

that routes were not pre-planned (Question 9), and travel is not frequently pre-arranged through travel intermediaries (Question 7).

<b>Table 5.8 ITR item frequency scores</b>							
<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency of Scores</i>						
	<i>Novelty</i>						<i>Familiarity</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1</b>	112	238	59	24	24	72	103
<b>4</b>	142	264	65	48	35	44	34
<b>7</b>	123	245	159	0	49	8	48
<b>9</b>	157	245	74	41	39	16	70
<b>15</b>	71	79	234	24	0	182	42
<b>18</b>	154	277	67	6	16	67	45
<b>19</b>	65	118	215	72	23	49	90
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>1466</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>432</b>
<b>2</b>	240	103	29	12	36	131	41
<b>5</b>	288	51	30	52	102	83	46
<b>6</b>	245	58	42	44	97	89	57
<b>12</b>	274	76	59	34	89	36	24
<b>17</b>	245	31	54	65	57	149	91
<b>20</b>	299	53	29	47	18	168	18
<b>Total Social Contact</b>	<b>1591</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>3</b>	36	68	228	42	42	182	34
<b>8</b>	38	45	237	84	38	144	46
<b>10</b>	70	56	233	46	39	145	43
<b>11</b>	64	136	48	79	179	71	55
<b>13</b>	53	90	239	55	37	130	28
<b>14</b>	49	74	245	42	23	165	34
<b>16</b>	99	59	229	48	17	147	33
<b>Total Destination</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>1459</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>273</b>

Most respondents were neutral about travelling to destinations with well developed travel industries and similarly neutral about requiring familiar restaurants at their destination choice. Almost half (49%) of the respondents wanted a flexible itinerary so that, if they found a place that pleased them, they would stay longer (Question 12). It is no surprise then that 68% of the respondents did not wish to have travel agents plan their entire trip for them (Question 18).

Many of the respondents who scored high novelty preferences in terms of travel service and destinations but were low in social contact were found in the campgrounds. One tent camper shed some light on this:

*“I like to just hike during the day and sit by the fire at night, I don’t want to go into town and have to meet new people and socialize”.*

The caravan (trailer) campers also offered:

*“When we camp we just like to pack and go. We’ll have some idea of an area but we like the spontaneity of picking a place at the spur of the moment”.*

Although this group of respondents as a whole scored high preferences for novelty-seeking in the social contact dimension, the campers tended to prefer familiarity and had little contact with local people when they traveled.

## 5.4 Information Sources

The respondents were also asked to indicate all information sources they use when planning a trip (Table 5.9). Friends were cited most frequently with 79.1% of respondents referring to them when planning a trip. Secondly, travel agents were considered by 64.1%, followed closely by the Internet which was consulted by 60.9% of the respondents.

Information sources	Frequency	Percent
Friends	500	79.1%
TV	212	33.5%
Internet	385	60.9%
Travel agent	405	64.1%
Brochure	203	32.1%
Books	234	37.0%
Travel catalogue	267	42.2%
Magazine	187	29.6%
Guidebook	298	47.2%
Visitor guide	155	24.5%



Guidebooks were also deemed to be a valuable resource for just under half (47.2%) of the respondents. Overall, the number of sources utilized by each of these respondents was quite high with the average respondent using four (4) information sources when planning a trip. Visitor guidebooks were consulted the least often and one respondent shed some light on why:

*“We can never even find a visitor guidebook until we get to the place, and then it’s all advertising and each town has like ten different ones. You have to go through the hassle of calling the place and requesting one to be sent if you really want one before you go. But, we do like to collect them while we’re on a trip and keep them as souvenirs or for next time if we ever go back.”*

Table 5.10 illustrates which information source the respondents felt to be most important to their decision making, and Table 5.11 summarizes the responses indicating which of the information sources was the least beneficial.

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends	152	24.1
TV	0	0
Internet	102	16.1
Travel agent	161	25.5
Brochure	0	0
Books	11	1.7
Travel Catalogue	65	10.3
Magazine	11	1.7
Guidebook	130	20.6
Visitor Guide	0	0
Total	632	100%

When respondents had to choose which one source was most important to them, the travel agent was preferred by 25.5% followed closely by friends (24.1%). The Internet was chosen fourth after guidebooks. Interestingly, travel agents were also chosen number one for the least important information source. Respondents had definite opinions regarding travel agents. On the one hand, one respondent indicated: *“we always book through a travel*

*agent, this way we know what we get”. A different viewpoint suggested that “...travel agents are useless, I never use ‘em. I get more up-to-date info from the Internet that they don’t even know about. And better prices.”*

The Internet was also chosen by 18.4% of the respondents as the least important information source. A common complaint voiced by several was that: *“the Internet is too confusing and takes too long to find what I need.”*

**Table 5.11 – Which is the least important information source to you?**

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends	0	0
TV	84	13.3
Internet	116	18.4
Travel Agent	137	21.7
Brochure	55	8.7
Books	119	18.8
Travel Catalogue	21	3.3
Magazine	44	7
Guidebook	23	3.6
Visitor Guide	33	5.2
Total	632	100%

Although the Internet was judged by some to be the most important information source and others as the least important, it was still utilized quite often as a reference and at various stages in the decision-making process. A detailed analysis of the respondents’ characteristics and patterns of Internet usage will follow as this is explored in more depth.

Tables 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14 cross-tabulate the respondent’s ITR score for each dimension (travel arrangement, social contact and destination) with their preferred information source. A score of 1 indicates the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicates the highest preference for familiarity. The figures represent percentage of respondents preferring an information source.

The respondents who selected the Internet as their preferred information source also usually scored high novelty preferences in the travel services dimension. Similarly, in the social contact dimension, most Internet users fell into the highest novelty-seeking range. Overall, the majority of destination scores for Internet users were positioned in the neutral range, translating to no real preference for new or familiar destinations among Internet users.

**Table 5.12 Travel Services Dimension**

ITR Score	Guide-books	Friends	Internet	Magazine	Books	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	2.8	3.8	3.9	1.3	2.2	2.6	1.6	18.2
2	4.8	7.5	6.2	3.1	3.6	6.1	4.2	35.5
3	2.0	3.2	2.5	1.2	1.6	2.6	1.6	14.7
4	.7	.8	.9	.2	.4	.5	.3	3.8
5	.6	1.1	.5	.3	.3	1.0	.5	4.3
6	1.5	3.5	2.0	1.1	1.3	3.0	2.1	14.5
7	.7	2	1.3	.9	.7	2.1	1.2	9.0

**Table 5.13 Social Contact Dimension**

ITR Score	Guide-books	Friends	Internet	Magazines	Books	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	5.8	9.0	7.8	3.4	4.5	6.9	4.6	42.0
2	.9	1.4	1.5	.7	.7	1.1	.9	7.2
3	1.1	1.2	1.3	.5	.8	.8	.7	6.4
4	1.9	2.5	2.2	1.0	.9	1.7	1.2	11.4
5	1.1	1.9	1.3	.7	1.0	2.3	1.2	9.5
6	1.7	4.7	2.8	1.4	1.7	3.8	2.5	18.4
7	.2	1.4	.5	.3	.5	1.8	.5	5.2

**Table 5.14 Destination Dimension**

ITR Score	Guide-books	Friends	Internet	Magazines	Books	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	1.6	1.8	1.7	.8	1.1	1.2	.7	9.2
2	1.7	2.3	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.2	1.2	11.9
3	4.5	7.1	5.9	2.6	3.1	5.7	4.1	33.0
4	1.2	1.2	1.8	.7	.9	1.5	.9	9.0
5	1.1	2.0	1.4	.5	.7	1.5	1.3	8.5
6	2.6	5.3	3.2	1.7	2.3	4.3	2.1	22.2
7	.9	1.5	.4	.4	.6	1.7	.6	6.2

The lack of clear destination preferences indicated by the surveys responses were echoed by the respondents' verbal comments. After filling out a survey at a trailhead, one couple remarked:

*“We just get in the camper and drive and when we find a spot that appeals to us, we stop and then look for information about the area we’ve chosen. Then Herb gets on the Internet...we’ve got a roaming account and a laptop in the camper... and we figure out where we can stay.”*

In this study, the neutral responses and indecisiveness surrounding destination decisions appeared only within the comments from the Banff summer visitors.

Although many of the Banff summer respondents did use the Internet, other sources were chosen quite often. The Internet was preferred by those with neutral preferences in the destination dimension, very high novelty-seeking preferences in the social contact dimension (scores of 1), and high in their preferences for novelty in travel services (scores of 2). Overall, the respondents used a wide variety of information sources, with seven sources noted consistently as the most important: guidebooks, friends, Internet, travel agents, magazines, books and travel catalogues.

## 5.5 Stages of Travel

Table 5.15 summarizes the response ratings of the level of importance of having various types of information available on the Internet. Respondents were asked to rate the level of importance from 1 to 7, whereby 1 is “very important” and 7 is “not important”. These scores were then totaled for all respondents. There were 181 people who chose not to fill out this portion of the survey, as they did not use the Internet. Therefore, the total scores were based upon 451 respondents. A score of 451-1127 indicated the most important, 1128-

**Table 5.15 Importance of Information on the Internet at Various Stages of Travel**

Type of Information	Stages of Travel					Overall Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
	No intention to travel	Pre-planning	Finalizing	Purchasing	While travelling	
General Information About a Destination	1364	1019	1276	1415	1612	6686
Accommodation	1838	1213	1126	1259	1810	7246
Attractions	1787	1479	1403	1556	1856	8081
Transportation	2003	1409	1238	1215	1898	7763
Events	1802	1464	1612	1677	1700	8255
Cultural Information	1839	1589	1766	1820	1920	8934
Other Web Site Links	2108	1623	1888	1876	2304	9799
Categories of Types of Travel	1969	1552	1857	1897	2173	9448
Totals	14710	11348	12166	12715	15273	

1578 very important, 1579-1804 somewhat important, 1805-2480 not very important, and 2481-3157 not important at all. Therefore, lower scores signify a higher level of importance that the respondents placed on a feature.

The importance of information available to the summer respondents at various stages of travel showed similar patterns to those exhibited by the winter respondents in Banff. Overall, the responses suggest that information on the Internet has value to the respondents since the average score assigned to each category was 3.1 (somewhat important). During the first stage of travel when there is no intention to take a trip, the respondents felt it was most important to have general travel information available on the Internet. It was also felt that cultural information was very important to access at this stage. As the respondents moved into the pre-planning stage, general information was still the most important but accommodation information and transportation became the second and third highest rank. When finalizing travel plans, respondents placed the highest priority on accommodation information, followed closely by transportation. In the purchasing stage, transportation was rated the most important, with accommodation also scoring as very important. While on a trip, the respondents indicated that having event information available on-line was most valuable to them. Overall totals point to general information as the most important to the respondents to have available on the Internet and other Web site links being of least significance. In addition, the lowest totals were recorded during the pre-planning stage, signifying that Internet information is most valuable at that time.

## 5.6 Case Summary

The Banff summer tourists were comprised of people with a wide range of ages. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated Internet use with 80% of those declaring regular on-line access. Novelty-seeking preferences were highest in terms of travel services and the majority of the respondents preferred to make few or no travel arrangements prior to reaching the destination.

Overall, the destination preferences were neutral, as a fairly even split occurred between those respondents who indicated new and different destinations were preferred, and those who indicated that destinations were chosen based upon their fondness for familiarity.

In this group of respondents, there is a substantial difference in proportions between the responses who indicated a likelihood to reserve on-line (63%) and those who actually did make reservations using the Internet (42%). There is also a difference between respondent's likelihood to purchase on-line (50%) and actual purchases made (42%). Perhaps more respondents would reserve their travel plans using the Internet if the capabilities were available to support this on-line. Similarly, there are factors precluding the respondents' abilities to purchase their travel products on the Internet, such as no e-commerce abilities on a Web site or slow loading of pages on a site. The frustration of encountering an extremely slow site was suggested as a deterrent in performing any reservations or purchases on-line.

When examining the stages of travel, this group of respondents would be most likely to pay for transportation on-line, but would prefer to use the Internet only to finalize accommodation plans and not pay for them. From the suppliers' perspective then, the best use and design of Web sites would allow accommodation reservations to take place without requiring complete pre-payment. For the transportation suppliers, the most effective Web sites would adopt e-commerce abilities to permit users to pre-pay on-line.

As an information source, the Internet was deemed as important overall, although travel agents and friends were even more important. Similar to the Banff winter case, the summer respondents averaged seven information sources to consult when planning a trip. However, different media were chosen: Internet, friends, travel catalogues, travel agents, magazines, books and guidebooks. Five remained consistent among summer and winter users while TV and brochures were replaced by books and guidebooks among the summer respondents.

## *Chapter 6*

### CRUISE TOURISTS

#### 6.0 Case Introduction

Just as it was important to examine the seasonal differences in one location, it is also important to consider the clientele and supply differences at alternative destinations or in association with primary activity type. The third case study considers cruise tourists and explores the same criteria used in the Banff winter and summer cases, in different locations to examine Internet use, information sources and novelty-seeking preferences among people choosing this type of trip. All three cases will then be compared in chapter 7.

It is expected that the cruise tourists will be older, enjoy trips with fixed itineraries, have more familiarity preferences, and have had less experience with computers. The primary reason for the trip was cited unanimously as simply “to take a cruise”.

#### 6.1 Suppliers

The supply for this chapter consists of the two cruise lines whose respondents were surveyed at various port docks. Both cruises were contacted to invite participation in this study, however neither would agree to answering questions regarding their use of the Internet citing “confidentiality” and “against company policy”. Therefore each Web site was accessed to determine the style, setup, features and links provided. Both Web sites were available when ‘cruise’ was typed into the two search engines (Google and MSN) and they offered similar information on vessel type, itineraries and ports of call. However, the significant difference between them is that Carnival Cruise line does not have the capability to perform reservation or booking functions on-line whereas the Disney Cruise Line Web site is able to handle



reservations but full payment is required to do so. The Carnival Cruise Line recommends a client to contact their travel agent for booking information but does not provide a link. The Disney Cruise Line suggests that a customer book directly with them either on-line or through their own travel agent by phone. Carnival does not have its own booking agency.

## 6.2 Respondent Characteristics

Potential respondents were intercepted on cruise docks in several locations: Nassau, Bahamas; St. Maarten; and St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (Figure 6.0). In addition, people were approached while on the Disney Cruise Line at sea. The cruise surveys were completed both on-board as well as on the cruise docks. On board the cruise ship, guests entering the lobby areas during various times of day were asked to participate in the surveys. Only those showing an interest by inquiring about the surveys were asked. This was a condition placed upon the researcher by the suppliers.

There was a tendency for a couple or group of people to approach the surveyor and ask about the research, but then quite often it was the female in the party who filled out the survey. When it was noticed that a large proportion of the surveys had been completed by females, and there were very few male respondents, the researcher chose to move to a new location in an attempt balance out the gender proportions. The researcher received permission from the suppliers to re-locate on an alternate floor. In the new location, fewer groups passed by and more single guests approached to fill out the surveys.

On the cruise docks in the ports of call, the researcher stood at the entrance/ exit gang-way with a clip board, and again awaited for interested guests to fill out the survey.

## Map 6.0 Cruise tourists survey locations



(source: adapted from Rand McNally 1990)

A total of 365 people agreed to fill out the questionnaires, with no refusals nor any incomplete surveys. The demographic characteristics of these 365 respondents are presented in Table 6.1.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
USA	263	72.1
Canada	87	23.8
Germany	11	3.0
France	4	1.1
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	208	57
Male	157	43
<i>Age</i>		
15-20	53	14.5
21-30	66	18.1
31-39	96	26.3
40-49	67	18.4
50-59	11	3.0
60-69	45	12.4
70+	27	7.4

The majority (57%) of respondents were female more than a quarter (26.3%) were between the ages of 31 and 39 years of age. There was a wide range of ages from 15 to over 70 years of age. Most of the respondents cited the U.S.A. as their home (72.1%), while just under a quarter (23.8%) was from Canada. The third most frequent country of origin was Germany (3%) and the fourth country which was cited was France (1.1%). Over half (53.4%) of the respondents indicated that they use the Internet. The Internet use questions which asked respondents to use a rating scale of 1 to 7 resulted in the frequencies found in Table 6.2. Table 6.3 summarizes the answers to questions using simple yes/no responses.

**Table 6.2 Scaled responses of Internet use among cruise tourists**

	Never		Occasionally			Daily/Frequently	
	← 1	2	3	4	5	6	→ 7
	<i>Frequency of scores</i>						
How often do you use the Internet?	156	13	0	0	0	26	170
Likelihood of accessing travel or destination Web site when NOT in market to travel?	168	25	24	12	48	75	13
Likelihood of searching for information on Internet?	180	0	12	0	24	50	99
Likelihood of reserving travel plans?	240	12	26	25	24	13	25
Likelihood of paying for travel-related products on –line?	229	12	26	37	36	1	24
Likelihood of using Internet while on a trip?	168	0	12	16	37	120	12
Likelihood of visiting a Web site related to past trip?	160	26	14	13	48	84	20

The scaled responses indicate that Internet users were most likely to go on-line daily. There were no responses of occasional Internet use. Respondents were reluctant to choose a high score when asked their likelihood of accessing travel-related information when they were not in the market to travel, yet all of the Internet users (plus one) indicated that they have actually linked to a travel-related Web site when they had no intention to travel. There were 195 people who answered that they use the Internet and 196 had linked to a travel-related site when they were not in the market to travel. In addition, all of the Internet users had gathered information on-line before making final travel plans. The numbers dropped off significantly for actual purchases as only half of the respondents had ever reserved on-line and less than one-quarter of Internet users had purchased a travel-related product on-line.

**Table 6.3 Internet use responses via Yes/No among cruise tourists**

Question	Yes		No	
	#	%	#	%
Do you use the Internet?	<b>195</b>	53.4%	<b>170</b>	46.6%
Have you ever linked to a travel-related web site when you were not in the market to travel?	<b>196</b>	53.7%	<b>169</b>	46.3%
Have you ever used the Internet to gather travel information before making your final travel plans?	<b>196</b>	53.7%	<b>169</b>	46.3%
Have you ever used the Internet to reserve your travel arrangements?	<b>99</b>	27.1%	<b>266</b>	72.9%
Have you ever purchased a travel-related product through the Internet?	<b>62</b>	17%	<b>303</b>	83%
Have you ever used the Internet while on a trip?	<b>107</b>	29.3%	<b>258</b>	70.7%
Have you ever visited a Web site related to a past trip?	<b>120</b>	32.9%	<b>245</b>	67.1%

Even though 83% of the respondents had never purchased a travel-related product through the Internet, when asked about their likelihood of purchasing travel-related products on-line, the number of respondents choosing ‘never’ was only 61.6%. Nevertheless, this suggests reluctance on the part of many respondents to purchase products on-line. The difference between the scaled responses and the yes/no responses can be interpreted as intent versus actual use. For example, when asked about the likelihood of reserving travel products, there is an implied intent to do so. Conversely, the answers to the yes/no questions (Table 6.3) measure the actual number of respondents who have reserved travel on-line. Over one-third (37.3%) of respondents indicated that they may purchase products on-line (the intent to do so), but only 17% had actually completed a transaction. Thus, the intent to purchase travel products on-line may be there among some respondents, but a factor precluding the purchase occurs. In this case, inability to complete the Carnival cruise purchase on-line may be a contributing factor to the differences among the scores.

Table 6.4 summarizes the types of travel-related purchases respondents had made on-line. The most frequent purchase was attraction tickets followed by accommodations and activities. The ‘other’ category was chosen by only ten respondents, all of whom had purchased their cruise on-line.

**Table 6.4 Type of Travel Purchases Made in Past**

Type of product	Frequency	Percent
Airline Travel	37	11.3%
Car Rental	25	7.6%
Accommodation	49	15%
Attraction Tickets	110	33.6%
Guided Tours	36	11.1%
Event Tickets	12	3.6%
Activity Booking	48	14.7%
Other	10	3.1%

(note: respondents could indicate more than one type of purchase)

Overall, the types of travel-related purchases made by the respondents spanned every category with some representation in each. Although only 17% of the respondents had previously purchased a travel-related product on-line, these respondents purchased a large variety of types of products using the Internet. An average of 5.3 travel-related products had been purchased by this group of respondents, out of a possible eight choices which were offered.

### 6.3 ITR Scale

The International Tourist Role (ITR) Scale was incorporated into the cruise survey to measure preferences for novelty or familiarity when traveling. Table 6.5 summarizes percentages of responses for each question in the scale. Factor analysis was utilized as the primary method of extracting various dimensions (Jiang, 2000). The initial principal components analysis revealed three distinct components and Table 6.6 illustrates the factor loadings after performing a Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The lowest factor loading was .580, which was considerably higher than the critical threshold (.326)

**Table 6.5 Cruise ITR responses**Rating Scale  
1=Strongly Agree StronglyDisagree-7

Questions	Percentage of responses (%) n=632						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when travelling in another country.	57	29	1	0	1	9	3
I prefer to travel to countries where the people are of different ethnic group from mine.	13	11	17	10	13	23	13
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same tourist infrastructure (such as highways, water supply, sewer, electric power, and communications systems) as in my country.	37	10	24	14	13	0	2
I prefer not to associate with the local people when travelling in a foreign country.	30	45	4	0	3	15	3
I prefer to seek the excitement of complete novelty by engaging in direct contact with a variety of new and different people.	5	16	20	0	13	33	13
I prefer to travel to countries where the culture is different from mine.	13	11	18	0	23	20	15
I prefer to make no arrangements through travel agencies before travelling to a foreign country.	1	11	0	0	0	22	66
I prefer to travel to countries with well-developed travel industries.	8	38	24	14	13	3	0
I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when travelling in a foreign country.	42	43	0	0	2	12	1
I prefer to travel to countries where there are restaurants familiar to me.	4	41	9	0	27	8	11
I prefer not to stay in international hotel chains when travelling in another country.	2	14	30	0	9	39	6
If I find a place that particularly pleases me, I may stop there long enough for social involvement in the life of the place to occur.	5	5	21	3	16	24	16
I put high priority on familiarity when thinking of travel destinations.	9	38	8	8	30	7	0
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same transportation system as in my country.	6	38	16	21	18	0	0
I prefer to be on a guided tour when travelling in a foreign country.	40	36	14	1	5	4	0
I prefer to have little personal contact with the local people when travelling in another country.	6	10	9	35	23	15	0
I prefer to live the way the people I visit live by sharing their shelter, food, and customs during my stay.	12	36	22	0	20	5	5
I prefer to have travel agencies take complete care of me, from beginning to end, when travelling in another country.	17	70	2	0	0	11	0
I prefer to travel to countries that are not popular tourist destinations.	3	0	27	8	16	12	34
I prefer to make friends with the local people when travelling in another country.	40	17	14	0	19	7	3

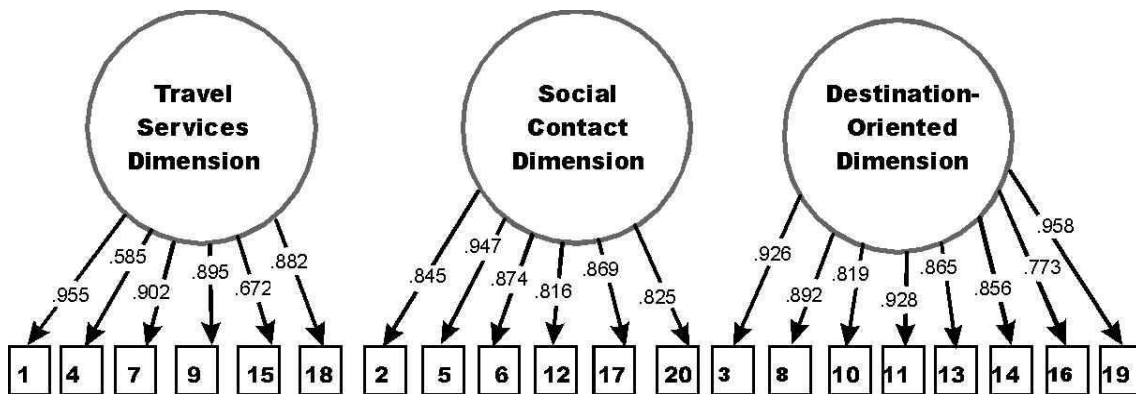
identified in the analysis of the original ITR Scale (Jiang 2000). The three components extracted represent the ITR dimensions on which novelty and/or familiarity preferences can be measured: destinations, social contact and travel services.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	destination	social contact	travel services
Variable1	.002	.212	.954
Variable 2	-.006	.916	.003
Variable 3	.949	.008	.155
Variable 4	-.124	.003	.754
Variable 5	.007	.965	.126
Variable 6	-.001	.933	.005
Variable 7	-.001	.318	.895
Variable 8	.923	-.191	.006
Variable 9	.007	.239	.913
Variable 10	.898	-.002	-.114
Variable 11	.959	-.001	-.009
Variable 12	-.185	.843	.267
Variable 13	.918	-.009	-.116
Variable 14	.901	-.209	.003
Variable 15	.559	.154	.580
Variable 16	.745	-.351	-.307
Variable 17	-.237	.833	.345
Variable 18	-.134	.134	.920
Variable 19	.975	.005	.006
Variable 20	-.001	.825	.380

Each question in the ITR Scale relates best to one of the components in Table 6.6. The variable which loads highest into one of the three components can be said to relate to that particular dimension. Figure 6.2 illustrates the extraction levels and communalities for the three dimensions.



**Figure 6.2 Correlation and grouping of ITR survey questions**



The responses to the first twenty questions of the survey (the ITR portion) were then recoded such that an answer of 1 indicated the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicated the highest preference for familiarity. Recoding the responses in this manner allows for a more straightforward interpretation of the results.

Table 6.7 arranges the recoded questions from the ITR scale into the best fit dimension. Novelty or familiarity preferences for travel services are measured by questions 1, 4, 7, 9, 15 and 18. Questions 2, 5, 6, 12, 17, and 20 measure preferences in the social contact dimension and the remaining questions can be grouped as destination preferences.

From Table 6.7, it is evident that the travel services dimension received very high familiarity scores. Respondents prefer to make most travel plans prior to leaving their home country and are likely to go on guided tours when traveling in a foreign country. There were almost no neutral scores (scores of 4) in this dimension and only a small concentration of novelty preferences. In the social contact dimension, there is a similar lack of neutral scores, a high preference for familiarity, but a wider range of novelty preferences. The respondents were more likely to indicate a preference to travel to countries where the culture is different (question 6), yet they definitely did not want to

<b>Table 6.7 ITR Item Frequency Scores</b>							
<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency of Scores</i>						<i>Familiarity</i>
	<i>Novelty</i>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1</b>	11	33	2	0	4	108	207
<b>4</b>	9	55	11	3	15	165	107
<b>7</b>	4	42	1	0	0	77	241
<b>9</b>	3	43	8	0	0	157	154
<b>15</b>	0	16	17	5	50	133	144
<b>18</b>	0	41	7	0	1	254	62
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>915</b>
<b>2</b>	46	39	65	38	47	83	47
<b>5</b>	19	57	74	0	47	121	47
<b>6</b>	46	39	65	0	85	76	54
<b>12</b>	19	18	75	11	59	125	58
<b>17</b>	19	17	72	1	77	132	47
<b>20</b>	9	27	68	1	50	61	149
<b>Total Social Contact</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>3</b>	9	0	48	51	87	37	133
<b>8</b>	0	10	49	51	85	139	31
<b>10</b>	38	28	98	0	31	147	23
<b>11</b>	9	54	111	0	31	140	20
<b>13</b>	1	27	108	29	30	139	31
<b>14</b>	0	0	64	78	60	140	23
<b>16</b>	0	60	84	129	31	38	23
<b>19</b>	9	1	98	29	58	45	125
<b>Total Destination</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>409</b>

share in the local food and culture (question 17). Similarly, the respondents scored fairly evenly along the range when asked about preferences to travel to countries where there is a different ethnic group (question 2), but the scores revealed a distinct preference not to make friends with the locals (question 20).

Most of the scores in the destination dimension fell into the neutral range (3 to 5) with the majority of respondents wanting to travel to countries where the transportation system is familiar, there are international hotel chains present and the country has a well-developed travel industry. The only question in the destination dimension which received a

significant number of novelty scores was question 10 which indicated that the presence of familiar restaurants was not a priority when choosing a destination.

It is interesting to note that the ITR scores from this particular case study were grouped into the three dimensions through factor analysis without omitting any of the questions (variables). The questions that loaded into each of the three dimensions reflect the original intent to measure preferences in that category (Jiang 2000) and, therefore, allow fairly straightforward interpretation of the results.

## 6. 4 Information Sources

The respondents were asked to indicate all of the information sources that they would use when planning a trip (Table 6.8). Friends were cited most frequently with 86.3% of respondents consulting with friends when planning a trip. Travel agents were also consulted by 80% of the respondents. More than three-quarters (75.9%) utilized travel catalogues as an information source, while the Internet was used by just over half (53.4%).

Information sources	Frequency	Percent
Friends	315	86.3%
TV	193	52.9%
Internet	195	53.4%
Travel agent	292	80%
Brochure	14	3.8%
Books	26	7.1%
Travel catalogue	277	75.9%
Magazine	134	36.7%
Guidebook	36	10%
Visitor guide	37	10.1%

Overall, an average of 4.2 sources was consulted by each respondent when planning and making travel-related decisions.

Table 6.9 illustrates which information source the respondents felt to be most important to their decision-making, and Table 6.10 summarizes the responses indicating which information source was the least beneficial. Although each type of information source was chosen by at least 14 respondents, when asked for the most important, only 4 types were chosen overall: friends, Internet, travel agents and travel catalogues. The number one information source felt to be most important by the respondents was the travel agent. The Internet was chosen second most often and friends were third. One person wrote on the survey: *“I use other information sources before a trip, but the travel agents are definitely the most important when booking”*.

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends	48	13.2%
TV		
Internet	87	23.8%
Travel agent	194	53.2%
Brochure		
Books		
Travel Catalogue	36	9.9%
Magazine		
Guidebook		
Visitor Guide		
Total	365	100%

Information source	Frequency	Percent
Friends		
TV	26	7.1
Internet	36	9.9%
Travel Agent		
Brochure	61	16.7%
Books	36	9.9%
Travel Catalogue	1	.3%
Magazine	12	3.3%
Guidebook	132	36.2%
Visitor Guide	61	16.7%
Total	365	100%

The least important information source was the guidebook and tied for second were brochures and visitor guides. The Internet was also chosen by almost a tenth of the respondents as the least important source. Only the travel agent and friends were not chosen by any respondents as their least important source of information used when planning travel.

Tables 6.11 through 6.13 cross-tabulate the ITR responses for each dimension (travel

**Table 6.11 Travel Services Dimension**

ITR Score	Friends	Internet	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	.8	.6	.4	.4	1.3
2	2.3	1.9	2.7	3.2	10.5
3	.6	.5	.5	.5	2.1
4	.1	.1	.1	.1	.4
5	.8	.5	.9	1.0	3.2
6	11.0	7.3	7.3	11.5	40.8
7	10.9	7.1	11.7	11.3	41.8

**Table 6.12 Social Contact Dimension**

ITR Score	Friends	Internet	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	2.1	1.2	2.1	1.8	7.2
2	2.1	1.6	2.8	2.5	9.0
3	5.7	3.8	4.8	.4	19.1
4	.6	.4	.6	.4	2.3
5	5.0	2.7	4.7	4.3	16.7
6	7.3	5.0	8.4	6.8	27.3
7	4.5	3.5	5.8	4.6	18.4

**Table 6.13 Destination Dimension**

ITR Score	Friends	Internet	Travel Agent	Travel Catalogue	Total Percentage
1	.4	.7	.5	.6	2.2
2	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.2	6.1
3	6.4	4.1	6.1	5.9	22.5
4	3.8	2	3.4	3.4	12.6
5	3.7	3.6	4.3	2.6	14.2
6	7.1	5.1	7.1	9.0	28.3
7	3.5	2.4	4	4.2	14.1

services, social contact and destination) with the respondents' preferred information source. An answer of 1 indicated the highest preference for novelty and 7 indicated the highest preference for familiarity. The figures represent percentage of respondents' preferred information source.

Little evidence is found of a strong link between high novelty seekers and any one specific information source in the three dimensions. Pearson's correlation coefficient statistics showed no significant correlation among ITR scores and any specific information source. Within each dimension however, there were stronger preferences for certain sources of information. The respondents who rated as high novelty seekers for the travel services dimension were found to rely most on friends as their information source. The familiarity seekers dominate the travel services dimension with 82.6% of the respondents scoring 6 or 7. It is not surprising that the respondents with high familiarity preferences for travel services were more inclined to choose travel agents as their information source preference. Respondents who had high familiarity scores in the destination dimension were more inclined to refer to catalogues. High scoring novelty seekers in the destination dimension were slightly more apt to use the Internet. In the social contact dimension, respondents preferring familiarity relied most heavily on friends and the Internet was chosen the least often by all.

Given that there is little statistical evidence of a correlation among the ITR scores and the respondents' use of information sources, no conclusions can be drawn regarding familiarity-seekers and their Internet use (or lack thereof).

## 6.5 Stages of Travel

Table 6.14 summarizes the respondents' ratings of the level of importance of having various types of information available on the Internet. Respondents were asked to rate the level of importance from 1 to 7, whereby 1 is "very important" and 7 is "not important".

There were 168 respondents who opted not to answer this series of questions as they were not Internet users. Therefore, the scores from 197 respondents were tallied. A total of 197-492 is considered most important, 493-689 very important, 690-886 somewhat important, 887-1182 not very important, and 1183-1379 not important at all. Therefore, lower scores signify a higher level of importance that the respondents place on a source.

When the respondents had no intention to travel, they did not find any type of information on the Internet to be of high importance. Having links available for other Web sites did rate most important during this stage, but overall totals indicate that, in general, when people have no intention to travel they are least concerned with travel information availability on the Internet.

During pre-planning, the respondents rated all types of information as highly important. General information was deemed most important, followed by information on accommodations and attractions. Scores in the pre-planning stage were the lowest overall indicating that information on the Internet is most useful to these respondents at this stage of travel. The finalizing and purchasing stages show very similar results with accommodation information rating as most important in both. While traveling, the overall importance of information decreases somewhat and event information become the most sought after. Although attractions did not rate in a top spot at any specific stage, the overall totals indicate that attraction information is regarded as being most important on the

**Table 6.14 Importance of Information on the Internet at Various Stages of Travel**

Type of Information	Stages of Travel					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	No intention to travel	Pre-planning	Finalizing	Purchasing	While travelling	Overall Totals
General Information About a Destination	923	282	612	597	569	2983
Accommodation	1514	379	443	443	847	3626
Attractions	696	389	458	502	590	2635
Transportation	960	416	447	462	880	3165
Events	814	476	533	618	555	2996
Cultural Information	780	502	507	603	723	3115
Other Web Site Links	637	457	829	882	1044	3849
Categories of Types of Travel	934	441	850	795	1279	4299
Totals	7258	3342	4679	4902	6487	



whole. Categories of travel (such as golf, skiing or cruises) are found to be of least importance overall on the Internet among this group of Internet users.

## 6.6 Case Summary

The respondents in this case indicated a definite preference for familiarity when traveling. Eighty-three percent of the scores for travel services were in the high familiarity zone (a score of 6 of 7). Destination preferences also pointed towards high familiarity and the same is true of social contact, although to a slightly lesser extent.

When planning a trip, this group of respondents consulted an average of only four information sources. They most often sought advice from friends when pre-planning their trip, however travel agents were rated as the most used information source when making final decisions. The Internet and travel catalogues also figured prominently, but more often as secondary information sources only after the trips had been booked.

On the whole, cruise tourists prefer to utilize a travel agent over other information sources. The 53.4% of respondents who did indicate they were Internet users were found to perform many travel related transactions on-line. The inability to reserve or purchase their cruise vacations directly through Carnival on-line may have contributed to a lower percentage actually reserving and purchasing on the Internet. The number of other travel-related items purchased on-line suggests that those respondents who use the Internet would be more inclined to engage in e-commerce if the opportunity to do so was available. As one respondent was checking off her past travel purchases she commented: *“If you asked me a year ago, my answers would have been much different. Now that I’ve gotten used to it, I go to the Internet for everything these days”*. Comments such as this suggest that the length of time a person has used the Internet may be influential in determining to what extent, and for what purpose, they use the Internet.

A further consideration is the fact that the Disney cruise respondents were able to access the Internet while on their current trip. In addition, the Disney Cruise line offers its

passengers the ability to learn to use the Internet through introductory classes that are offered daily. These two factors may have contributed to a larger percentage of respondents indicating that they used the Internet while traveling. A non-Internet user explained his desire to learn the Internet but his reluctance to do so as well: *“I would like to use the Internet, but have never had the chance to learn it. The kids all use it but don’t want to explain the basics. I can’t even turn the thing [computer] on. Guess they don’t want us knowing what they’re up to”*. These sentiments expressed by one respondent were reiterated by others as well, with a similar apprehension about using the Internet. The technology as well as the device (the computer) are unfamiliar and many respondents implied that the whole “kit and caboodle is beyond...” their ability or willingness to learn.

In summary, the travelers surveyed in this case study were all engaged in the same primary activity – a cruise. However, the cruise was also considered by many of the respondents to be a destination.

*“This is our fourth cruise and we’re way more interested in the different types of boats we choose and the activities on ship for us to do. The stops we make along the way are fun and all, but it doesn’t even matter where we go, all the island countries are about the same now anyways.”*

This perception by the respondents of the cruise ship serving also as the destination may call into question how *destination* is defined in the tourism literature.

## *Chapter 7*

### CASE COMPARISONS

This chapter will summarize and compare the results of the three preceding empirical chapters. A discussion of the implications of these findings will then be presented in Chapter 8, followed by the conclusions and suggestions for future research.

#### 7.1 Suppliers

It was not within the scope of this study to perform individual in-depth analyses on each Web site and to compare these with user preferences. Rather, the intent was to have an understanding of the Internet resources that potential and actual tourists could access for each of the study cases. Therefore, the comparison of Web site design is performed only on a general basis. The Web pages differed significantly among the 49 supply sites accessed. The quality of graphics, overall visual design and loading times varied significantly. In addition, the capabilities and links offered on the various sites ranged from none to leading-edge abilities. Some only acted as general information sources while others could be used to check availability, perform secure monetary transactions or permit the viewing of a travel product from 360°. One cruise company had limited functions on their Web site, where availability could not be determined, reservations could not be taken, nor could monetary transactions be performed. The other cruise company had all of these capabilities on their Internet site.

A comparison of the targets or goals of the various suppliers with the respondents' Internet use is limited to those from the Banff winter and summer cases due to the unwillingness of the cruise suppliers to share their marketing strategies. In general, the aim of Internet marketing among the Banff suppliers had not been defined precisely and many were

uncertain why they originally set up a Web site. In fact, out of the forty-seven suppliers who were interviewed, only two had a clear purpose when designing their sites. When asked what was the main objective or goal for marketing your business on the Internet, one supplier summed up her reason for having a Web site as *“We didn’t want to be left out with every other business being on the Internet and us not”*. This statement was echoed by many other suppliers. The suppliers’ main goals did not seem to match up with their success determinants (Table 7.1). Thirteen suppliers gauged success by counting the number of bookings they received on-line; yet ensuring efficient or effective booking capabilities was not mentioned as a priority when designing their sites. Number of hits to a site is one of the more popular methods of tracking found throughout marketing literature (CyberAtlas.com 2001) and is also prevalent with suppliers in this study (51 %).

**Table 7.1 Supplier’s Internet Objectives/Success Determinants**

Supplier Type	Objectives		Success Determinants				
	unsure	As an information source	Receive bookings on-line	Number of hits	Get phone calls	e-mail load is reduced	unsure
Accommodation	26		9	12	2		3
Transportation	3		2		1		
General Information	4	1		4		1	
Events	5		1	2	2		1
Cultural	4			3			1
Attractions	3			2			1
Tour Company		1	1	1			
Cruise							
Total	45	2	13	24	5	1	6

The suppliers’ Internet objectives seemed to be evolving and changing with their comfort levels and experience. While almost all suppliers were unsure of their objectives at the time of designing their Web sites, most had thought about it after and were able to identify a success determinant. The smaller accommodation suppliers, such as ‘bed and breakfasts’, were able to adapt to taking Internet reservations much easier and quicker than the larger

hotels and inns seemed to be able to. During the summer case exploration, several bed and breakfasts that had not previously taken reservations on-line but, when interviewed in the winter, had now introduced this function on their sites. One bed and breakfast supplier explained *“We now do 90% of our business on-line, we almost never get phone calls anymore. The other 10% is mostly walk-ins”*. The owners/operators had designed the Web site themselves and, although it could not perform monetary transactions, they replied to e-mail requests for reservations and information on a regular basis. In contrast, a hotel employee commented in frustration: *“Our Internet site is useless, we can’t even update it because an outside company designed it and we have to go through them for any changes we want to it. And that’s only after it is approved by management and everyone else!!”* Although the larger hotels may have more advanced technological features on their sites, such as 360° views, the capabilities to change information and monitor business in a timely fashion are perhaps more important aspects rather than simply having the latest technology available on a site.

## 7.2 Tourist Respondents

The respondents from each case are defined differently according to their socio-demographic profiles, novelty-seeking preferences and also their exhibited patterns of Internet use. This section will explore the socio-demographic differences, then the novelty-seeking and Internet use comparisons will follow in subsequent sections.

The majority of Banff winter tourists were male between the ages of 20 and 49 years with fairly high income levels. The main reasons given for their trips to Banff during the time period surveyed were skiing, snowboarding, conferences, and “weekend getaways.” As winter visitors, the bulk of the respondents were young adults involved in active recreations that tend to be quite expensive to participate in. In addition, many of the respondents indicated that they usually take several trips per year, which include a winter

ski/snowboard holiday. Most had also previously visited the Canadian Rocky Mountain area during the winter season. This group of respondents all used the Internet regularly; for tourism-related activities they were found to book mostly accommodation and transportation.

The Banff summer tourists were also predominantly male although to a lesser extent than the winter visitors. The most common age groups were split between those who were 30 to 39 years of age and those who were between 60 and 69 years of age. Individual income level varied considerably among each age group and as a whole for this case. The main reasons for the respondents' trips to Banff in the summer were: hiking, camping, conferences, health/spa, mountains, family holiday, weekend getaway, caravan trip and group tours. The visitors tended to engage in many different activities while in Banff in an attempt to see and do everything. One visitor described the aim of their trip as "trying to get the most from this place because we may never be back." For many of the summer visitors, this was their first trip to Banff and most did not normally take more than one holiday per year. Several respondents who were on group tours and family holidays mentioned that they did not anticipate returning to the Banff area again, even though they claimed satisfaction with their holiday. Comments such as "This is the most beautiful place we've ever been" and "We absolutely love this place", were followed by "We can't see ever getting back here." Interestingly, similar comments were echoed with the caravan campers, who indicated that they were retired and spend considerable amounts of time "just driving from place to place."

More than three-quarters of the Banff summer respondents indicated regular Internet use, although less than half had reserved their travel plans on-line and even less had ever conducted an on-line purchase. Several of the respondents stressed that the Internet was

instrumental in their information gathering before destinations were actually chosen and then again after they had booked travel to learn more about where they planned to go.

The cruise respondents were predominantly female between the ages of 31 to 39 with an average individual income between \$20,000 and \$50,000. While this group were the least likely to be Internet users, with just over half indicating that they use the Internet, they were most inclined to reserve activities and group tours as well as purchase events.

A summary of the total respondents in the study is found in Table 7.2. Overall there were slightly more respondents from the U.S.A (44.1%) than from Canada (42.5%), followed by Germany, England and Australia. The countries of travelers' origin followed international data findings from WTO (2003) which list the top 15 countries of origin for international travelers and included Canada, USA, France, Germany, and China, signifying that the sample of respondents in this study are indicative of tourist arrival patterns world-wide. The male to female ratio of respondents was 1.4: 1.0, and there was a fairly equal representation and a variety of ages among adult respondents. The largest represented age group was 31-39. The majority of respondents (58.8%) reported an income between \$20,000 and \$49,000. There were very few respondents (3.9%) who indicated earnings of less than \$19,999.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Winter</i> (n=202)	<i>Summer</i> (n=632)	<i>Cruise</i> (n=365)	<i>Total %</i>
Canada	58%	48%	24%	42.5
USA	21%	35%	72%	44.1
Germany	5%	7%	3%	5.2
England	8%	3%		3.0
Australia	4%	2%		1.8
France		2%	1%	1.3
Wales		1%		.7
Japan		1%		.7
China	3%			.6
New Zealand	1%			.1
<i>Gender</i>				



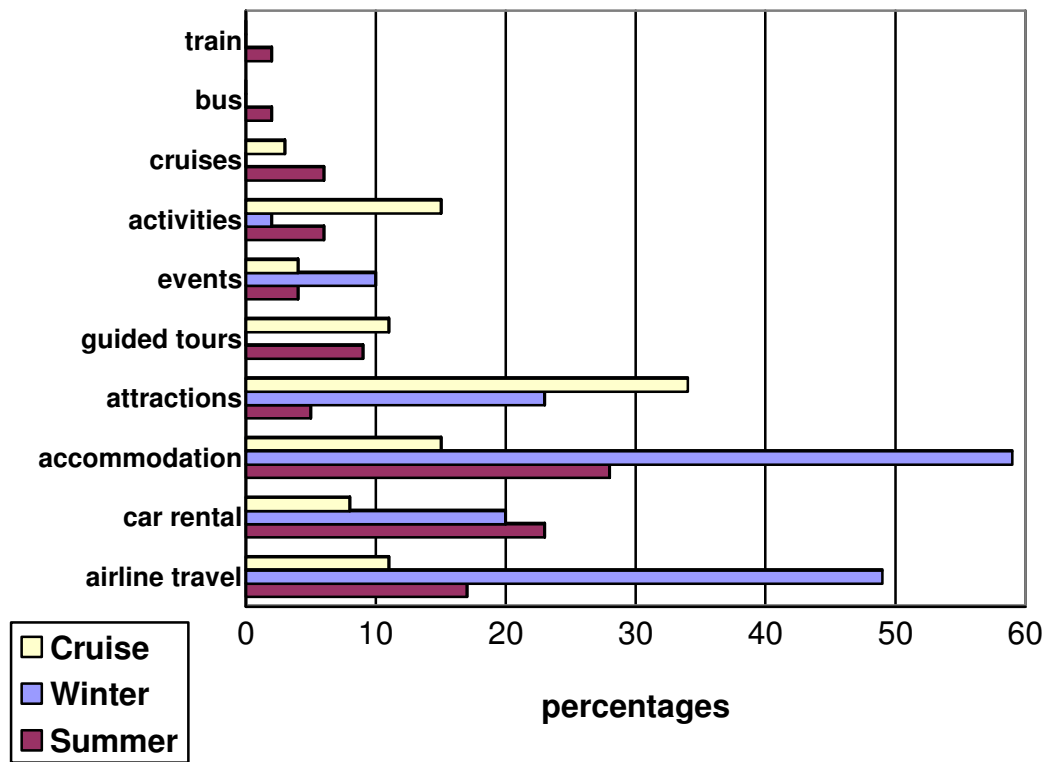
	Female	22%	39%	57%	41.5
	Male	78%	61%	43%	58.5
<i>Age</i>					
	15-20		4%	15%	6.3
	21-30	28%	15%	18%	18.0
	31-39	40%	28%	26%	29.3
	40-49	24%	7%	18%	13.2
	50-59	6%	16%	3%	10.6
	60-69	3%	24%	12%	16.8
	70+		7%	7%	5.8
<i>Income level (\$)</i>					
	0-19,999				3.9
	20,000-49,999				58.8
	50,000-99,999				28.8
	100,000+				8.5

Internet use among the respondents is quite prevalent with almost three-quarters (72.5%) using the Internet. Almost all of those who indicated Internet use (86%) do so on a regular basis. A total of 98% use the Internet to gather information, 60% had reserved travel on-line, and 54% had purchased a travel related product on the Internet. When comparing cases, the Banff winter respondents were the youngest aged, earned the highest levels of income and were the most intensive users of the Internet, most often purchasing travel-related products. Among the Banff summer tourists there was a wider representation of ages and amounts of Internet use activities, although no significant correlation between usage and other variables. The cruise tourists also contained a wide assortment of age groups. However, Internet involvement was very similar among users, for those who indicated Internet use were usually found to be consistently the heaviest users, accessing daily and performing many more functions on-line. The types of travel-related products most often purchased on-line are found in Figure 7.1.

The Banff winter tourists were found to be the most frequent purchasers of accommodations and airline travel. Conversely, none of the Banff winter respondents had purchased guided tours, cruises, bus or train transportation. This group was more willing

to reserve a large portion of their travel, such as the airline and main hotel stay, but averse to making any further commitments to their winter holidays in terms of having a set itinerary, specific tickets, or pre-purchased tours. There was also a significant difference noted between the intent to reserve on-line and actual reservations for travel-related products which were made using the Internet. From the comments received from the Banff winter tourists there is a general apprehension among this group with providing credit cards on-line to hold travel reservations. More reservations might be made if pre-payment or credit information was not required by the suppliers. On the other hand, the difference between intent to reserve and actual reservations may be due to the reluctance to commit to a set itinerary for their trip. By not providing credit information to a potential supplier,

**Figure 7.1 Group comparison of on-line travel purchases**



there is no obligation to purchase a product, thereby allowing potential clients the flexibility to make decisions at the spur of the moment, and not be compelled to adhere to a fixed schedule.

Summer respondents purchased the widest variety of travel-related products on-line, having obtained accommodations via the Internet the most frequently and transportation almost as often, but also purchasing events tickets, attractions and group tours. The summer tourists also purchased several other travel-related products, such as train and bus travel, which had not been purchased by either the winter or the cruise respondents. The majority of summer tourists actually indicated that they would likely reserve and purchase travel on-line although the percentage who had in fact completed a reservation or purchase was significantly lower. Several respondents suggested that they were precluded from doing so by the inabilities of the Web sites to perform these functions. The limitations on Internet purchases or reservations in this case are likely due to the constraints of the suppliers' sites, rather than reluctance by the summer tourists to perform such functions on-line.

The cruise respondents purchased attraction tickets and activities the most often. They were less likely to purchase airline travel or accommodations than the other two cases. In fact, the cruise tourists were also unlikely to purchase a cruise over the Internet, although the inability to purchase a Carnival cruise directly from the supplier may have contributed to these responses. As with the previous two cases, it was observed that there was a significant difference between intent to purchase a travel-related product and actually having done so.

### 7.3 ITR Scale

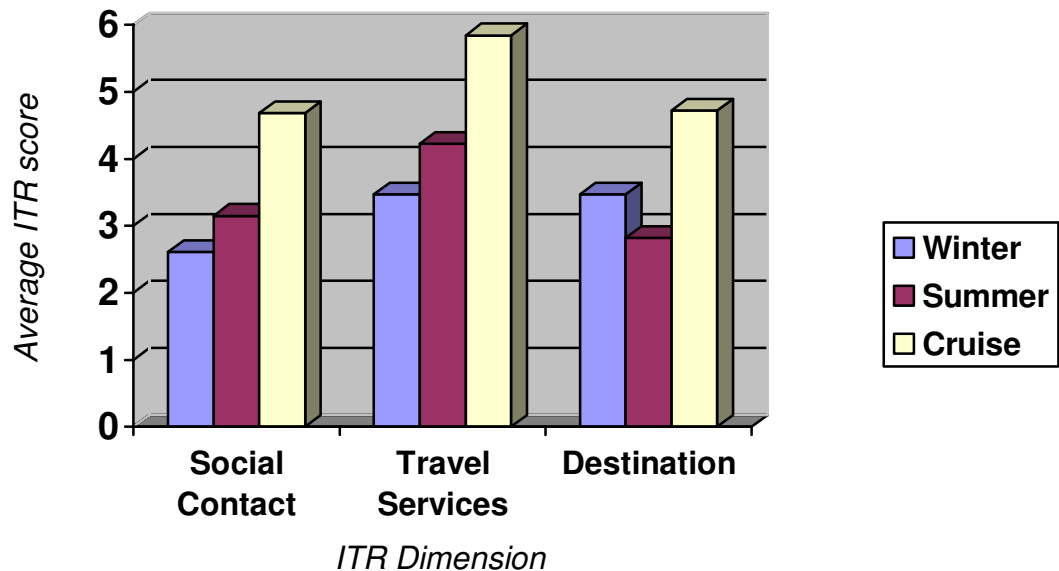
Prior to comparing the respondents' novelty-seeking preferences, the use and functionality of the ITR Scale as a consistent, reliable and valid measurement tool will be discussed. Data were collected for each case study using surveys. Then the responses were inputted into SPSS and the same statistical procedure was followed for all three cases. For the Banff summer and cruise responses, three components were obtained through factor analysis using all twenty questions of the survey instrument. However, the Banff winter responses did not fit the model as directly as the other two cases. Four factors continued to result even after rotating the data. The responses to questions 9 and 1 were found to be inconsistent. Interestingly, questions 9 ("I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when travelling in a foreign country") merely rewords question 1 ("I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when travelling in another country") yet produced significant differences in terms of loadings. Perhaps the term 'route' in item 9 suggests 'destination choice' to people as opposed to 'travel arrangement' which was the original intention of the wording. Further analysis revealed that once item 9 was removed completely, 3 distinct components were extracted. This was not noticed in any of the other cases, suggesting that perhaps the psychographic characteristics that distinguish these segments of tourists extend into their use and perception of terminology.

Nevertheless, the respondents from each case are defined quite differently according to the ITR Scale (Figure 7.2). Potential mean scores range from 1 to 7, whereby lower scores indicate a preference for novelty and higher scores point to a preference for familiarity. The Banff winter tourists scored an average of 2.61 in the social contact dimension, 3.47 in the destination dimension and 3.47 in the travel services dimension, overall being the most inclined towards novelty-preferences. The Banff summer tourists scored an average of 3.15 in the social contact dimension, 2.88 in the destination dimension, and 4.22 in the travel

services dimension. The cruise tourists averaged 4.68 in the social contact dimension, 4.72 in the destination dimension, and 5.84 in the travel services dimension, which places them towards familiarity preferences.

As each case was dealt with separately in the preceding three chapters, the ITR scale data will be examined together as a whole and compared to explore linkages with information sources and other variables. The usage of the ITR scale to segment tourists according to their novelty-seeking preferences and their associated Internet usage patterns as a whole will be compared with the patterns observed in each case to check the validity of this method of segmentation. Specifically, do the linkages between the information sources and novelty-seeking preferences extend beyond a specific destination or primary activity. In order to explore the validity in this respect, the data from each case study must be grouped together and examined.

**Figure 7.2 Average ITR score comparison between cases and dimensions**



Basala (2001) used the ITR Scale to classify individuals into different travel-style groups. The same methods can be applied in this study to group all respondents from the three cases according to their novelty preferences and to compare those with their Internet usage. The three dimensions (travel services, destination and social contact) will be combined to form one total score which then serves as a basis for also comparing cases. Potential individual ITR measures could range from 20 to 140, where 20 indicates high novelty seeking and 140 indicates high familiarity. The actual mean of all scores for the respondents is 78 with a standard deviation of 27. Following Basala (2001), respondents with a score lower than minus one standard deviation are classified as Novelty Seekers (NS), those with a score between minus one and plus one standard deviation are classified as Average Tourists (AT) and those above plus one standard deviation are classified as Familiarity Seekers (FS). Through this procedure, 170 respondents were generated in the FS group, 705 in the AT group, and 324 in the NS group.

Table 7.3 highlights the number of respondents in each group and by case study. By this measure, Banff winter respondents are mostly comprised of novelty-seekers (60%), cruises had the highest percentage of familiarity seekers of the three cases (58%) and Banff summer respondents were mostly comprised of average tourists (61%). This pattern mirrors the results found in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

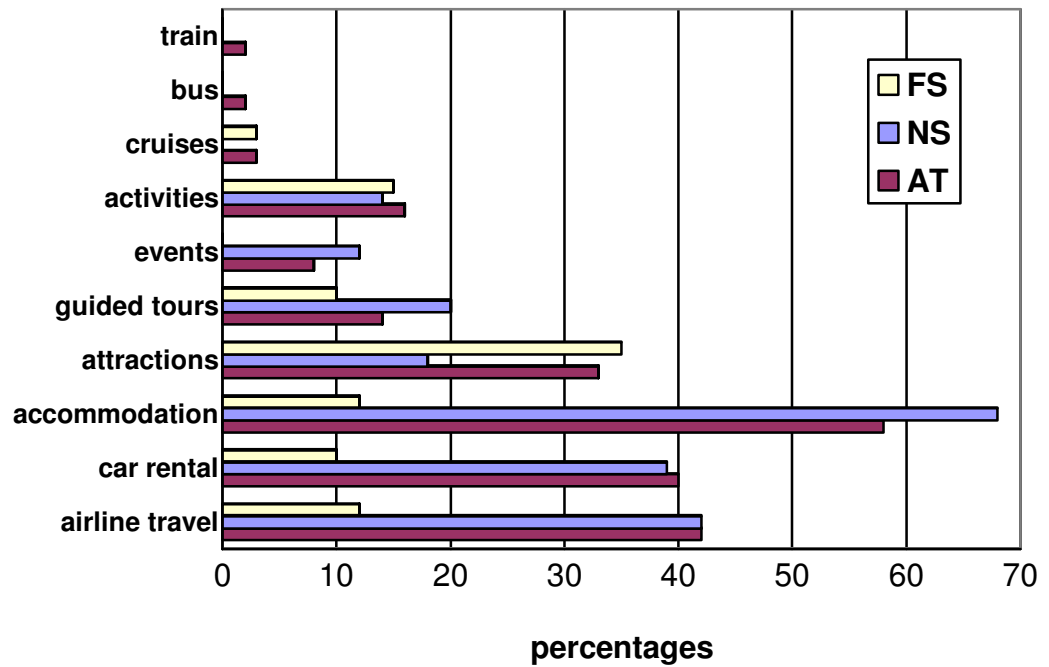
	<i>Banff Winter</i>	<i>Banff Summer</i>	<i>Cruise</i>	Total
<b>NS</b>	120	197	7	324
<b>AT</b>	61	385	259	705

<b>FS</b>	21	50	99	170
<b>Total</b>	202	632	365	

One of the study objectives was to examine Internet use among novelty-seekers. It was expected that Internet use would be the highest for those in the NS group. The results supported this as 84% of the NS group use the Internet, compared to 75.5% of the AT group and 39% in the FS group.

The Internet usage patterns were very similar between NS and Banff winter, AT and Banff summer, and FS and cruise tourists. Figure 7.3 presents a comparison of travel-related Internet purchases by ITR group. The purchase patterns are significantly correlated with those from Figure 7.1 which compared the locations (cases) and their associated travel-related purchases. At a confidence level of .01, Pearson's Coefficient Correlation resulted

**Figure 7.3 ITR comparison of on-line travel product purchases**



in a .893 level of correlation between AT and Banff summer tourists, .907 between NS and Banff winter tourists, and .985 between FS and cruise tourists.

The novelty-seekers were most inclined to purchase on-line accommodation, car rentals and air travel, but were less likely to purchase event, activity or attraction tickets; patterns which are very similar to the Banff winter tourists. Familiarity-seekers tend to purchase attractions more often and airline travel and accommodations less frequently. These FS purchase patterns mirror those of the cruise respondents.

## 7.4 Information Sources

Novelty seekers were more inclined to use a variety of information sources, but only slightly so (Table 7.4). NS used an average of 7.1 types of information, most frequently citing the Internet, followed by guidebooks as their most important sources. AT consulted



an average of 6.3 types of information sources, also most frequently citing Internet. However, they cited travel agents almost as often. Friends were indicated as being the next most often used source of information. Respondents in the FS category tended to use only an average of 3.8 information sources, with travel agents overwhelmingly the most popular choice.

Even though sources such as friends and travel catalogues were cited often as information sources, when asked which tool was most important to their decision making, the NS respondents cited the Internet, the AT chose the Internet by a small margin over travel agent and the FS group overwhelmingly chose the travel agent (Table 7.5).

#### **Table 7.4 Number of information sources used among ITR groups**

The most important information sources to the various ITR groups were also significantly correlated with those found when comparing two of the cases. Banff winter tourists chose the Internet as their number one information source, followed by travel agents and friends,

**Table 7.5 Most important information source comparisons**

<b>Information sources</b>	<b>ITR Group</b>					
	<i>Novelty Seekers</i>		<i>Average Tourists</i>		<i>Familiarity Seekers</i>	
	<i>n=324</i>		<i>n=705</i>		<i>n=170</i>	
Friends	226	<b>70%</b>	530	<b>75%</b>	153	<b>90%</b>
TV	98	<b>30%</b>	309	<b>43%</b>	88	<b>51%</b>
Internet	272	<b>80%</b>	532	<b>75%</b>	66	<b>39%</b>
Travel agent	186	<b>57%</b>	458	<b>65%</b>	147	<b>87%</b>
Brochures	99	<b>30%</b>	175	<b>25%</b>	5	<b>2%</b>
Books	130	<b>40%</b>	201	<b>28%</b>	15	<b>9%</b>
Travel Catalogues	116	<b>36%</b>	403	<b>57%</b>	105	<b>62%</b>
Magazines	125	<b>38%</b>	232	<b>33%</b>	54	<b>31%</b>
Guidebooks	151	<b>47%</b>	239	<b>34%</b>	13	<b>7%</b>
Visitor Guides	83	<b>26%</b>	98	<b>14%</b>	11	<b>6%</b>
Average number of sources per respondent	<b>7.1</b>		<b>6.3</b>		<b>3.8</b>	
	NS		AT		FS	
	n=325		n=705		n=170	
Internet	32.6%		30.3%		12.9%	
Friends	18.8%		17.1%		8.8%	
Travel Agent	19.1%		29.3%		64.9%	
Travel Catalogue	8.3%		9.7%		7.6%	

Brochures	0	1.4%	2.9%
Television	0	0	0
Magazines	1%	2.4%	0
Books	.6%	.5%	2.9%
Visitor Guide	0	0	0
Guidebook	19.6%	9.3%	0

patterns of choice were noted with the FS group. However, the Banff summer tourists differed slightly in that they preferred travel agents as their number one information source, followed closely by friends, guidebooks and the Internet. The AT category revealed a preference for the Internet overall, followed by travel agents, friends and guidebooks.

## 7.5 Stages of Travel

Part three of the survey gathered responses in an effort to determine what types of information are important to tourists at various stages of travel, as well as the relative importance of the Internet and its usage at these various stages. Table 7.6 compares the responses from each case at the various stages of travel. The three cases are compared using the respondents' choices for the most important category of information at each stage of travel. In stage 1, when there is no intention to take a trip, the Banff tourists (both summer and winter) prefer to have access to general information about destinations. The cruise tourists indicated that they preferred to have links to other sites available to them during stage 1. During stage 2 (when pre-planning travel), general information is deemed as most important in all three cases. When reserving travel-related products and making final travel plans, respondents from all three cases indicated that being able to access accommodation information is most important. When paying for travel-related products,

cruise tourists are seeking accommodation information and Banff winter tourists seek the ability to purchase transportation. The Banff summer respondents indicated that general information once again becomes the priority at stage 4, as they are less likely to pay for travel-related products on-line. While on a trip (stage 5), cruise tourists want access to event information on-line, while Banff winter and summer respondents indicated a preference for general information about the destination they are at.

**Table 7.6 Case comparison of travel stages**

	1	2	3	4	5	Most important category
Cruise	other Web links	General	accommodation	accommodation	events	Attractions
Winter	general	General	accommodation	transportation	general	General
Summer	general	General	accommodation	general	general	General
<i>Most important stage</i>		<i>cruise summer</i>	<i>winter</i>			

In terms of the overall importance of having certain types of travel-related information available on-line, the cruise tourists indicated that attractions' information is most important. The Banff winter and summer respondents cited general tourism information as the most important category on the Internet.

When examining Internet use throughout the stages, cruise tourists and Banff summer tourists were most likely to access the Internet during pre-planning of their trips, gathering information and making comparisons. Banff winter tourists most often access the Internet during stage 3, to book or reserve travel-related products.

## 7.6 Summary

When comparing the case destinations and seasonality, there were indeed differences in Internet use and preferences between them. These differences and similarities between each case were found to correspond with the groups formed using the ITR scale (NS, AT, and FS). The Banff winter tourists correspond primarily to the Novelty Seeking (NS) group, the Banff summer respondents to the Average Tourist (AT) group, and the cruise tourists are mostly Familiarity Seekers (FS). The main findings are summarized below.

### *Suppliers:*

- Most travel-related suppliers had no clear objective when designing a Web site or having a Web site designed for them.
- Most suppliers felt the need to have an Internet presence for their travel-related product.
- Most suppliers felt that their Web site was benefiting their businesses but most did not have a clear method of tracking the success of their sites.

### *Banff winter respondents*

- Most respondents were young, earned a substantial income and used the Internet on a regular basis.
- The primary activities that the respondents were engaged in included skiing, snowboarding, conferences and weekend get-aways.
- Most respondents prefer to purchase accommodation and air travel using the Internet.

### *Banff summer respondents*

- Respondents were a wide variety of ages and income levels.
- Respondents engaged in a wide variety of activities such as hiking, camping, conferences, health/spa, mountains, family holiday, weekend getaway, caravan trip and group tours.
- Many respondents were first-time visitors to Banff and were unlikely to plan a return vacation.
- Most respondents utilize the Internet when planning travel.

### *Cruise respondents*

- Most respondents rely on travel agents for their travel planning.
- Respondents most often purchase attraction and event tickets on-line.

### *Novelty-seeking preferences*

- The ITR Scale was found to be useful in segmenting tourists and associating information source usage with the groups.
- Banff winter tourists exhibited the same characteristics as Novelty Seekers (NS).
- Banff summer respondents mirrored the Average Tourist.
- Cruise tourists and Familiarity Seekers used the same information sources when planning travel.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the main themes identified in the literature related to Internet use in tourism, including decision making, the use of information sources, general Internet use patterns, as well as novelty-seeking behaviour links with information sources and as a method of segmentation, in relation to the empirical research gathered in this study. The six guiding questions which were posed in chapter one will be revisited as they relate to the empirical data and the literature:

1. *How is the Internet being used by potential and actual tourists?* General Internet use by the respondents in the three case studies will be examined and related to literature concerned with patterns of Internet use.
2. *At what stage of travel are people using the Internet?* The usage patterns at various stages of travel will be explored with the relevant literature.
3. *Is the Internet influencing travel patterns?* Literature related to on-line tourism products and/or services are linked to the responses gathered in the three cases.
4. *Have people made different choices because of the Internet?* Literature related to on-line tourism products and/or services are linked to the responses gathered in the three cases.
5. *Are certain tourist types more likely to use the Internet as their information and/or transaction source preference?* Literature comparing the Internet to other media and links to decision making will be examined in association with the information sources data gathered in each of the three cases.
6. *Since novelty-seeking tourists require greater variety and more intensive information (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987), would they be more apt to use the Internet than other sources?* The ITR Scale will be examined.

In answering the above questions, this study and analyses will contribute to a better understanding of Internet suppliers, users and the segmentation of tourists based on novelty-seeking preferences.

## 8.2 Interpretation of Results and Relation to Literature-Based Research Ideas

The ideas behind postmodern thought were introduced in Chapter 2 as a context or ‘epoch’ within which to examine Internet use in tourism. Since postmodernists emphasize the importance of media and communication to current day society (Kumar 1997; Lyotard 1984), the Internet was explored throughout this dissertation as a form of communication which many tourists choose to utilize. Suppliers of tourism products were also shown to have adopted the Internet as a chosen medium to communicate their products to the customers (tourists).

In order to explore the relationships between people and places, postmodernists argue that modernist meta-narratives that seek universal truths are not able to adequately explain the differences in society (Kitchen and Tate 2000). The differences, however, are of interest in tourism research and marketing. With the postmodern emphasis on images, symbols and communication and the appeal of these in the postmodern world, the Internet, as a transmitter of symbols and images and a widely adopted method of communication, is a highly effective tool for information exchange in tourism.

As more people are embracing the Internet, availability and accessibility is growing and this, in turn, is dissolving boundaries for use. The Internet is potentially global in its reach but consists of a compilation of fragments of information; it dissolves boundaries but, at



the same time, permits access of market niches. This dualism is echoed throughout the postmodern perspective. On one hand, postmodernists suggest that society is moving away from being a “mass” phenomenon, to many smaller groups with more specific wants and needs. On the other hand, they suggest that society is rebelling against the formation of boundaries and groups. The tourism market has become increasingly fragmented and the Internet has provided a link to these specific ‘niche markets’. However, many tourism suppliers are unsure of how to market to these specific niches and often employ a mass market strategy.

Understanding how the Internet is used in tourism remains relevant at present as more businesses are creating Web sites, and more people are turning to the Internet for tourism information. Tourism itself contributes to and reflects an ever-changing dynamic relationship between people and places, and the Internet is a constantly evolving technology employed within this realm. Simple counting of the number of times a Web site is accessed does not do justice to the intricacies of the relationship between people and the Internet as it is used in tourism. Examining the motivation for Internet use among tourists and suppliers is one step towards understanding this complex relationship. However, one case study exploring motivation and usage would not suffice to obtain an understanding of Internet uses in tourism. When research is performed and data collected, these data usually examine a situation at a particular point in time, whereas the many uses of the Internet are in a constant state of flux.

Recent studies continue to refer to the need for technology research to be explored in the context of tourism. “Since organizations in the tourism industry have distinctive and unique computing needs as well as different technological maturity, there is a need to examine the antecedents and outcomes in the context of tourism specifically” (Yuan, Gretzel, Fesenmaier 2003; 241). The Internet has become an integral part of many

tourism enterprises and there is a need to understand the use of the Internet by consumers (tourists) as well as suppliers (the tourism industry). Suppliers are receiving more information via the Internet, are acquiring computer training or employees with relevant skills and are becoming more comfortable and familiar with using the Internet. Along with the increasing comfort levels come increased usage, greater knowledge and the desire to make their Web pages more comprehensive, and consequently more complex, by offering more features and choices to the consumer.

Similarly, as the users become more familiar with what is available on-line for them to access and the types of information that can be obtained, and as the comfort level to experiment with new and different features increases, they have greater expectations from Web sites and their operations.

The incorporation of both supply and demand into one model has few precedents within tourism studies and even less in the technology and innovation literature. Klein and Sora (1996) evaluated models used to examine innovation implementation and found that they differ substantially between those focusing on supplier industries (source-based models) and those concentrating upon consumers (user-based models). However, researching both supply and demand and, in particular, the different information needs of various players in the tourism industry has become more prevalent recently (Goeldner 2000; Mitchell 2002; Voss 2003), although a widely-accepted holistic model is still lacking.

### 8.2.1 Supply

Although most marketers seek to influence actual travel behaviour, influencing consumer preferences is an important intermediate objective for marketing and promotional activities (van Raaij 1986; Basala 2001). The understanding of tourist preferences is crucial to successful marketing. However, the suppliers in Banff have taken very few steps to try and understand or influence consumer preferences using the Internet. Other than the Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau, which coordinates the Internet presence of suppliers, the latter did not have a clear strategy for their Web sites. Most had designed their sites to look as appealing as possible but, within the constraints of limited knowledge and financial capital to invest. For those who had their Web sites constructed by an outside person or company, significant costs were often incurred but, even so, no pre-determined goals had been established for their sites. The majority of tourism suppliers put blind faith into the Internet, believing that if they put up a Web site and, maintained an Internet presence, it will somehow bring them more business. The suppliers could benefit from incorporating some knowledge of their consumers' Internet use and preferences into their marketing strategies, including the use of various promotional and sales tools. However, much of the focus is on tracking the use of Web sites and attempting to determine how many hits their sites receive.

If a visitor information Web site is monitored for the number of times it is accessed, is this an adequate measure of its effectiveness? Many of the Banff suppliers believed that measuring the number of hits was the most efficient method of determining effectiveness. However, in most cases, when the same suppliers were visited at a later date after they had been initially interviewed, they had changed their opinions about tracking the number of hits to their Web

sites. The general consensus was that they had reconsidered their success determinants and were now interested in devising strategies to attract new business using the Internet, following up with e-mail requests for information, and monitoring their sites more closely.

In terms of general marketing strategies, Carnival Cruises uses psychographic segmentation to determine to whom to target their product (Kotler 2003). They currently target tourists who travel to Orlando, Las Vegas and all-inclusive resorts (Kotler 2003). Kotler (2003) further determined that Carnival Cruises does not define its market as a distinctive type of holiday (i.e. a cruise), rather, they position themselves as a 'destination vacation' and feel their biggest competitors are Disney World and Las Vegas.

The results of this study give mild support to the idea of a cruise being viewed as a destination as well as a primary activity. However, the respondents in this study also felt that a 'cruise' was a type of holiday, and once the initial decision was made to 'take a cruise', the next step was to determine the cruise line, based primarily on price and amenities on board. The itinerary was less important to the decision-making. In addition, it was found that since most respondents had been on previous cruises, comparisons of what features each cruise had became of utmost importance. For those respondents who used the Internet, the features which were most influential to their decision-making were based on the information derived from Internet searches. For those who did not use the Internet, cruise line choice was often made from word-of-mouth referrals either from a travel agent or a friend or relative.

A cruise, as a holiday type, is perhaps more similar to a ski or golf holiday, than to a specific destination alternative such as Orlando or Las Vegas as Carnival Cruise maintains. Similar to the skier in Banff who takes more than one trip per year, always including a ski holiday among their choices; the cruise tourist also tends to take more than one holiday per year and will attempt to include a cruise holiday every year in addition to other trip types. Thus, there is a

notable difference between trip types as determined by primary activity, rather than primarily by destination choice. Because a cruise and a ski holiday are seen as different from a 'traditional destination holiday', the marketing requirements differ as well. The information sources that a potential tourist will access when planning a vacation may be different depending on the type of holiday. Also, many attributes of the holiday may be already pre-determined from one trip to the next, narrowing down the decisions that have to be made. If a person accepts or assumes that they will take a ski holiday or a cruise each year, the choices are not between every possible destination with each having the exact same opportunity to be chosen. Rather, the choice is constrained by the availability of activities or holiday types. The traditional fight for market-share among all tourism suppliers (and destinations), become significantly reduced as the potential market is no longer all available trips. The market is reduced to only those who offer a particular type of vacation opportunity. With this in mind, defining the appropriate market segment, and determining the common characteristics with it is very significant to the suppliers. How each segment responds to marketing tools and information sources, and how they use these tools to make decisions is crucial.

### 8.2.2 Defining demand

When defining a specific tourism market, it is important to appreciate that the Internet may be used differently by different market segments. If potential tourists have specific expectations of the form and contents of a worthy Web site and their criteria are not met, then the Web site will be ineffective in promoting the destination or business. In fact, several of the respondents indicated that even if they were attempting to reserve travel on the Internet that had been specifically recommended by a friend, if they were unable to

complete their reservation, booking or transaction on-line they would choose an alternative property or product whose Web site did have the capabilities regardless of their original intent when going on-line.

As a result of exploring the characteristics of different segments (through three case studies and the novelty-familiarity scale), it is concluded that although Internet use was most prevalent with the Banff winter tourists, it was not solely the destination or trip type which correlated with Internet use. Intensive users of the Internet were found in all three cases. Also, some respondents with demographic profiles typifying the average Banff winter tourist, were present in the other two case studies. In fact, it was the psychographic profiles which helped to segment more accurately those tourists who are the most intensive Internet users. The degree of novelty-seeking preferences was the strongest predictor of Internet use.

*Are certain tourist types more likely to use the Internet as their information and/or transaction source preference?*

The answer to this question is “Yes”. The tourists who were surveyed during the winter season in Banff were the most likely to use the Internet as opposed to other methods of information gathering. They also performed the most transactions on-line although they did not purchase as many different travel-products as some other respondents. As was mentioned previously though, it can not be concluded that the destination and the primary activity were the main links to the volume and type of Internet use. Rather, those who scored high novelty preferences in all three cases could be said to use the Internet the most, performing the most transactions and purchasing the widest diversity of travel products.

### 8.2.3 Novelty-seeking

Novelty-seeking has been used in tourism research as a basis for tourist classification (Cohen 1972), and for differentiating tourist roles (Dimanche and Havitz 1994; Jiang, Havitz and O'Brien 2000). In addition, novelty-seeking as a motive for travel has been argued to lead to more intensive information searches and the use of a greater variety of sources (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987). Linking novelty-seeking to information sources, and primarily the Internet, has strong roots in the literature, but had not been fully explored. Validating the use of novelty-seeking as a method for segmenting tourists and comparing their Internet use patterns was expected to provide a basis for examining supply and demand as well as the effectiveness of the Internet as a marketing tool to certain segments of tourists. Novelty-preference segmentation is continuing to receive attention by many researchers (Basala 2001).

Banff winter tourists scored high novelty-seeking preferences, although many of these respondents had visited the Banff area previously. Novelty-seeking, as defined in the literature, is a search for the new or novel, suggesting that these types of tourists would be less inclined to visit the same destination repeatedly. Yet, many of the respondents indicated that they were repeat visitors to the Banff/Lake Louise ski area.

It is possible that, since these respondents also indicated multiple trips throughout the year, their other destination choices would reflect the novelty-seeking to a greater extent. It was noted several respondents that they felt skiing/snowboarding to be such a challenge in itself that they did not require a new destination to achieve the satisfaction for their vacation. This confirms that novelty-seeking should not be measured on one dimension, such as destination choice, alone. Novelty-seeking segmentation requires the use of several measures and individuals should not be labeled as novelty-seekers solely on the basis of their destination choice.

*Since novelty-seeking tourists require greater variety and more intensive information (Crompton 1979; Snepenger 1987), would they be more apt to use the Internet than other sources?*

Again, the question is answered affirmatively. Novelty-seekers were found to be more inclined to use the Internet than were familiarity-seekers, although it was not evident that novelty-seekers require a greater variety of information. When exploring the number of information sources consulted, the differences between NS and AT respondents were minimal. It is argued that because the Internet contains such a wide variety of information in itself, the need to consult other sources of information is reduced.

#### 8.2.4 Decision-making

One common feature of all decision-making models that were examined in chapter 2 is the information source component. Understanding where information fits into decision making, what kinds of information influence the final destination choice (Mansfeld 1992) and the roles of information as perceived by potential and actual tourists, are questions that have been pursued in decision-making research. As the use of the Internet by tourists was explored in this dissertation, the importance of type information became apparent. Certain types of information were seen as more being valuable to tourists at certain stages of decision making and travel. In addition, the types of information that were important differed not only between stages, but also between types of tourists.

Novelty-seekers and those respondents contacted during winter season in Banff preferred to have general information available on the Internet. The most frequent use of the Internet was during the reserving stage of travel. At this point it may be expected that destination had already been determined and that the Internet was used simply to reserve the plans. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely with novelty-seekers, the final decisions



have not yet been made at the time when they access the Internet to reserve travel and are actually finalized only at the time of booking. This suggests that the Internet plays a much greater role in decision making than other sources of information. As previously discussed, many NS respondents will only reserve travel that is available on the Internet, regardless of their original destination or product intention.

MacKay and Fesenmaier (1998) proposed market segmentation based on behavioural changes throughout the destination choice process. Information searches are suggested to take place at various stages throughout the behavioural model. They conclude that visual information pieces (such as lure brochures) are important in more than the image-forming stage of decision-making.

The results from this study support MacKay and Fesenmaier's theory that visual information sources, such as the Internet, are instrumental throughout the stages of decision-making.

### 8.2.5 Image formation

*Have people made different choices because of the Internet?*

Again the question is answered in the affirmative. For those who regularly use the Internet, many of their final tourism decisions are made as a result of information received on-line, the abilities to finalize plans on-line, or the ease (timing) in which they could determine availability and make reservation. Although whether the deciding factor was based on ease of booking on-line, an appealing image found on the Internet, price comparisons made on-line, or convenience of timing, further research needs to be performed to ascertain exactly

which of these was the mitigating factor. It has been shown that the Internet has undeniable influences on tourism choices. This research does not dispute other factors which contribute to image formation (as found in Dilley 1986; Gartner 1993; Lubbe 1998; Baloglu 1999; Goossens 2000), and the influences of images on tourism choices. In fact, the Internet encapsulates many of the characteristics highlighted in these other studies which contribute to image formation.

Vogt (2003; 349) found that “images can be induced and result from marketing activities intended to cause individuals to visit a destination.” Marketing destinations on the Internet can contribute not only to the formation of an initial image, but also allows the user to access further information about a potential destination. Other information sources do not allow the spontaneous interactivity of the Internet. Marketing on the Internet may be more effective then, since there is the potential for an individual to engage in information searches about a destination even if there was originally is no intent to go on a holiday. In fact, all of the respondents who indicated regular Internet use had also accessed travel information when they had absolutely no intention to take a trip. These random searches on the Internet may contribute to a higher possibility of selecting a particular accessed destination or type of trip.

In addition, Vogt (2003; 349) found that “a favourable image is important because it can lead to additional information search that can create knowledge and an intention to visit the destination.” These findings suggest that tourism suppliers should maintain a strong Internet presence with up-to-date information and visual appeal for those individuals doing random travel-related searches. Potential tourists may be persuaded by a more appealing design and functionality of a particular site and will retain a more favourable image.

### 8.2.6 Information sources

It has been suggested that information search behaviour may partly depend on consumer preferences for specific information sources (Andereck and Caldwell 1993). For example, in 1994, 66 percent of those seeking tour packages were strongly influenced by travel agent recommendations (Canada 1994). Harris and Brown (1992) also examined information sources used by travelers. Their demographic analyses indicated that certain segments of the population exist that prefer to use particular information sources. In this study, the psychographic segmentation also related to particular information source preferences with the NS group more inclined to use the Internet as their number one information source, followed by travel agents and friends. The FS chose travel agents as their number one information source, followed by Internet, friends and travel catalogues. The AT category revealed a preference for Internet overall, followed by travel agents, friends and guidebooks.

Um and Crompton (1990) concluded that social stimuli, mostly the recommendations of friends and relatives, dominate as the most important information sources. This may hold true for certain types of tourists in this study, as the FS chose travel agents as their number one information source, and friends as number three. However, the Internet may provide some of the social stimuli in different forms. As the Internet has become widely adopted in society, simply finding travel-related sites on the Internet can be seen a social activity. For example, an individual finding a more obscure trip or a cheaper flight than his or her counterparts may become a point for discussion and comparison in many social groups. The argument is that it may not in fact be the personal recommendation from a friend that is most important, but the point that the trip was discussed at all. The discussion surrounding what site on the Internet that was accessed, or using which search engine to find the deal may become the topic of discussion, and the resulting trip or flight to be

purchased has been validated through a form of social stimuli and round-about referral. The discussion itself may contribute to an individual's comfort level or security in reserving or booking a particular travel product, knowing others who have done the same. Therefore, if a trip can be found on the Internet and the process of using the Internet itself is acceptable to the individual's social network, then the Internet as an information source can be said to have the same social stimulus to incite choice.

### 8.3.1 Research Implications

The empirical research conducted in Banff and on the cruise industry contributes to existing knowledge, concepts and research in four themes: tourism marketing, particularly related to media; novelty-seeking and psychographic segmentation; stages of travel; and the use of the Internet in society.

A case was made for the necessity to examine the effectiveness of the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism. It was suggested by Castells (2000; 392) that the Internet represents "the emergence of a new medium, mixing forms of communication which were previously separated in different domains of the human mind." As such, marketing through the Internet requires a different strategy than with traditional media. For example, newspapers or magazines would focus on sight-related ads, and radio ads would focus on sound. The Internet stimulates both sight and sound, but is also physical in the sense that to utilize the Internet requires input or deliberate use by someone. The user of this particular marketing tool must initiate the interaction; the Internet itself does not target nor overtly contact specific people. Walle (1996; 76) maintains that "outbound Internet tactics are primarily intended to mass market and promote products to all interested Internet users." However, the research from this study illustrates that it would

be more effective for suppliers to create separate sites to meet more adequately the needs of smaller niche markets in lieu of mass marketing as noted by Walle (1996).

Although it was determined that general information is mostly sought after on the Internet, for those individuals who require more information, it is imperative to have more comprehensive Web sites. As a supplier, if the decision to have Internet presence has been made, there has already been a resolution to allocate the necessary resources to do so. Bearing this in mind, to design a Web site with more capabilities does not require considerably more capital outlay than is required of a simpler site. In the end, the Web sites will be most efficient if they have a variety of abilities to appeal to various segments of the market. Vogt (2003; 349) also suggests that “information that is tailored to different audiences is more effective than general information.”

Continued research in the areas of marketing and the Internet are still sought as “our understanding of the Internet as a marketing tool is still developing” (Susskind, Bonn and Dev 2003; 257). Perhaps the most recently published study to examine the Internet as a marketing tool in tourism focused on the supply side and examined Visitor and Convention Bureaus use of the Internet (Yuan, Gretzel, and Fesenmaier 2003). The thrust of the study was on the perceived usefulness of the Internet by the American convention and visitor bureaus. The recommendations were focused on education, reiterating the need to educate suppliers on the use of IT in tourism (Yuan, Gretzel and Fesenmaier 2003). The findings in this research certainly echo the need to better educate tourism suppliers in the use of the Internet as a potentially valuable marketing tool.

The novelty-seeking scores across three case studies validated previous segmentation research and development of a novelty-seeking measurement tool (Jiang 2000; Mo 1993; Basala 2001). Measuring one variable across three case studies is considered a valid method of data gathering

facilitating comparative analyses. Bowen (2002; 13) suggests that there is a need to use surveys to generate statistical scores on “a particular attribute and to track its change with repeat measurements on separate occasions.” Using the ITR scale as a survey instrument to generate scores for statistical analysis contributes empirical findings which, in turn, have been related back to the novelty-seeking theory as a method of segmentation. Basala (2001) utilized the ITR scale and offered that perhaps “a more in-depth examination of individuals across the novelty-familiarity continuum should be conducted”.

As reviewed in section 2.5.3, Iso-Ahola (1980) argues that tourism needs will change over time, across places, and are dependent on situations and social company. Iso-Ahola’s approach has been criticized as having limited applicability from a marketing or industry standpoint, and as having limited future use due to the difficulty of measuring optimal arousal, one of his key concepts (Pearce 1993). However, when measuring novelty-seeking preferences in this study, they were found to vary on similar dimensions as originally identified by Iso-Ahola, the destination, social, and travel arrangements dimensions. Segmenting tourists based on novelty preferences in these three dimensions has been shown here to have applicability from a marketing standpoint. Perhaps the usefulness of Iso-Ahola’s segmentation studies have been overlooked simply because the ‘marketing or industry value’ could not be directly ascertained.

Plog (1974) asserted that specific travel preferences and behaviours were associated with each market segment. It was reported that the various segments had particular media preferences, with psychocentrics being heavy television watchers and allocentrics more print-oriented (Plog 1974). With the adoption of the Internet in society, Plog’s media preferences may not longer be mutually exclusive categories. However, the fact that certain segments of tourists do indeed have media preferences was found to hold true with the Internet preferences of the NS group, and the travel agent preference for the FS.

McKercher (2002) examined the validity of segmenting cultural tourists according to their activity/attraction preferences and found that activity-based segmentation is destination specific. These findings would not apply to the cruise tourists as the primary activity, cruising, was found to indeed be a distinct market segment.

### 8.3.2 Future Research Directions

This research examined Internet use and novelty-seeking preferences among respondents in three case study areas. It was determined that the primary activities that the respondents were engaged in were mostly specific to one particular location. The response differences among the primary activities might be more thoroughly explored given the opportunity to survey respondents engaged in the same primary activity in different locations. For example, comparing skiers' Internet use between several different resort areas may yield different Internet use patterns. The respondent's from the Banff winter case all used the Internet regularly, but whether that is a function of skiers as a specific market segment, or tourists drawn to that specific destination for skiing could not be determined from one case study. In addition, the high novelty-seeking preferences exhibited by the Banff winter respondents may have been specifically for that case or destination alone. Surveying skiers at a resort not located in the Rocky Mountains area may produce different results. Similarly, surveying skiers' Internet use at a resort destination that does not have all of the supplier's hosting Web sites may reveal different patterns of Internet usage among respondents.

It is also important to appreciate that the Internet is used differently by different market segments. Internet use among the cruise tourists differed from summer tourists in Banff, whose use in turn differed from winter tourists in Banff. Potential tourists have specific

expectations of the form and contents of a worthy Web site and should their criteria not be met, then the Web site will be ineffective in promoting the destination or business and the consumer may choose another product. Further research is warranted into the desired form and contents are and the specific attributes that are sought by different market segments.

On the other hand, having a Web site which appeals to a large variety of tourists may seem ideal, but it may be possible to attract an overabundance of tourists to an area or attraction simply as a result of having an Internet 'link' or extraordinary features on a site. If the particular tourist supplier is not prepared for a sudden influx of customers, it may result in dissatisfaction among clients and the risk of damage to the resource on which the supply is based through overbooking, environmental degradation, insufficient supplies and related management challenges. Even though this research explored several case studies of tourists and their associated Internet use, evidence is still lacking concerning the extent with which the Internet is used by other market segments in destinations world-wide.

Regardless, the Internet does appear to be effective means of marketing various types of tourism. The case studies illustrate the pervasiveness of Internet use among both suppliers and tourists in some markets, and it is likely to continue to be an important means of information exchange between suppliers and tourists for the foreseeable future.

Examination of Internet use at various stages of travel and its importance as an information source, could also be extended to the use of other information sources at various stages of travel. The focus of the current study was to explore the Internet. It has been determined how tourists used the Internet at various stages of travel and what information was important to them. Future surveys could examine other information sources and how they are used at various stages of travel. Determining at what point



tourists are more likely to contact a travel agent, use a guidebook, rent a video, or go on-line to access information would enable broader conclusions to be drawn and comparisons made.

## 8.4 Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the Internet and the role it is playing in tourism. The use of the Internet by tourism suppliers, travel intermediaries and tourists has been reviewed and three case studies have been outlined. A common feature throughout these discussions has been an emphasis on the role of the Internet as an information source, a marketing tool, and as a means of making transactions. Suppliers were shown to be increasingly adopting the Internet into their business activities in a variety of capacities from use as a marketing tool, provision of general information, checking availability, reserving, booking and performing monetary transactions. Some suppliers, such as cruise lines, are even incorporating instruction on Internet use as an activity for tourists and using their Internet café as a lure for travelers. As a diverse marketing medium, the Internet has the advantage that it can be used by virtually everyone in the tourism industry from the largest operator to the smallest.

## *A p p e n d i x A*

### INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

#### Checklist of words/phrases for Interviews

Questions and answers to consider in interview:

- 1) What is your main objective or goal for marketing via the Internet?
  - a. information source
  - b. generate business
  - c. receive bookings
  - d. e-mail traffic
  - e. uncertain
  
- 2) How do you gauge/determine the success of marketing via the Internet?
  - a. receive bookings on-line
  - b. number of hits to site
  - c. increased phone calls
  - d. e-mail
  - e. uncertain

## *Appendix B*

### Survey Instrument

#### Parts of Survey:

- 1) ITR Scale
- 2) Internet Use
- 3) Stages of Travel and Information source use
- 4) Socio-demographics

# Part 1. Your International Travel Preference

Each of the items below refers to your preferences in general when travelling in a foreign country or when choosing an international travel destination. Your responses to these statements are confidential, and will be used only in group comparisons. You do not need to give your name, so there is no way to identify you personally from your responses.

(Please circle one number as your response to each of the following statements.)

	1=Strongly Agree			7= Strongly Disagree			
I prefer to start a trip with no pre-planned or definite timetables when travelling in another country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries where the people are of different ethnic group from mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same tourist infrastructure (such as highways, water supply, sewer, electric power, and communications systems) as in my country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer not to associate with the local people when travelling in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to seek the excitement of complete novelty by engaging in direct contact with a variety of new and different people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries where the culture is different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to make no arrangements through travel agencies before travelling to a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries with well-developed travel industries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to start a trip with pre-planned or definite routes when travelling in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries where there are restaurants familiar to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer not to stay in international hotel chains when travelling in another country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I find a place that particularly pleases me, I may stop there long enough for social involvement in the life of the place to occur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I put high priority on familiarity when thinking of travel destinations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries where they have the same transportation system as in my country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to be on a guided tour when travelling in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to have little personal contact with the local people when travelling in another country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to live the way the people I visit live by sharing their shelter, food, and customs during my stay.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to have travel agencies take complete care of me, from beginning to end, when travelling in another country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to travel to countries that are not popular tourist destinations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to make friends with the local people when travelling in another country.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part 2. Your Internet Use

1. Do you use the Internet? Yes  No

2. Where do you access the Internet? (check as many as apply)

Home  Work  School  Library  Internet Café

Community Provided Access  Personal Wireless  Other (please specify)

3. On average, how often do you use the Internet?

Once per Year	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

4. When you are NOT planning to take a trip, how likely are you to access any type of travel or destination Web Site?

Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

5. Have you ever linked to a travel-related web site when you were NOT in the market to travel?

Yes  No

6. When you have decided to take a trip, how likely are you to search for information using the Internet?

Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

7. Have you ever used the Internet to gather travel information before making your final travel plans?

Yes  No

8. When you are reserving your travel arrangements, how likely are you to use the Internet to reserve these plans?

Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

9. Have you ever used the Internet to reserve your travel arrangements?

Yes  No

10. When you are paying for your travel arrangements, how likely are you to pay through a Web Site?

Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

11. Have you ever purchased a travel-related product through the Internet?

Yes  No

12. If yes, what type of travel product have you purchased on the Internet? (check all that apply)

Airline Travel  Car Rental  Accommodation  Attraction Tickets  Guided Tour

Event Tickets  Activity Booking (eg. Golf or Ski Ticket)  Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. How likely are you to use the Internet while you are on a trip?

Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
1	2	3	4
		5	6
			7

14. Have you ever used the Internet while on a trip?

Yes  No

15. How likely are you to visit a web site related to a past trip?

Never		Occasionally		Sometimes		Frequently
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Have you ever visited a Web site related to past trips?

Yes

No

## **DIFFERENT STAGES OF TRAVEL**

Please think about the type of information that is available on the Internet, and rate the importance to you of having the following features available on the Internet at your various stages of travel.

(Please circle one number as your response to each of the following statements)

When you have

### **NO INTENTION TO TAKE A TRIP**

	1= Very Important to Me					7= Not Important	
General Information about a Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accommodation Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transportation Information (For example: Airlines, Car Rental, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Web Site Links	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Categories of Types of Travel (For example: Cruises, Ecotourism, Skiing, Golf, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When you are

### **PRE-PLANNING A TRIP**

	1= Very Important to Me					7= Not Important	
General Information about a Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accommodation Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transportation Information (For example: Airlines, Car Rental, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Web Site Links	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Categories of Types of Travel (For example: Cruises, Ecotourism, Skiing, Golf, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When you are

**MAKING FINAL TRAVEL PLANS**

	1= Very Important to Me					7= Not Important	
General Information about a Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accommodation Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transportation Information (For example: Airlines, Car Rental, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Web Site Links	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Categories of Types of Travel (For example: Cruises, Ecotourism, Skiing, Golf, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When you are

**RESERVING/BOOKING/or PURCHASING TRAVEL**

	1= Very Important to Me					7= Not Important	
General Information about a Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accommodation Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transportation Information (For example: Airlines, Car Rental, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Web Site Links	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Categories of Types of Travel (For example: Cruises, Ecotourism, Skiing, Golf, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

While you are

**ON A TRIP**

	1= Very Important to Me					7= Not Important	
General Information about a Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accommodation Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transportation Information (For example: Airlines, Car Rental, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Web Site Links	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Categories of Types of Travel (For example: Cruises, Ecotourism, Skiing, Golf, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Part 3. General Information

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Where is your home? City \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Your Gender:  Male  Female

Your Age:

15-20  21-30  31-39  40-49  50-59  60-69  70+

Your average yearly income:

\$0-19,999  \$20,000-49,999  \$50,000-99,000  over \$100,000

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Which information sources do you currently use when planning a trip? (check as many as apply)

Friends/Word of Mouth  Television/Videos  Travel Agent  Internet  
 Magazine s  Brochures  Travel Catalogues  Books  Guidebooks  Visitor Guides

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Of those selected which is the **MOST IMPORTANT** information source to you? (check **only ONE**)

Friends/Word of Mouth  Television/Videos  Travel Agent  Internet  
 Magazines  Brochures  Travel Catalogues  Books  Guidebooks  Visitor Guides

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Which is the **LEAST IMPORTANT** to you? (check **only ONE**)

Friends/Word of Mouth  Television/Videos  Travel Agent  Internet  
 Magazines  Brochures  Travel Catalogues  Books  Guidebooks  Visitor Guides

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**Thank you for participating  
in this Internet Travel Study!**

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