Benchmarking the Performance of DMOs' Websites

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It is a very intuitive assumption that the interest of the traveler in a destination is expressed by the visit of a destination marketing organization's website, or the keywords used when searching online for a particular destination during the pre-trip phase. Knowledge on significant relationships and the time lags between information retrieval and arrivals can assist managers to optimize the schedule, placement and customization of online marketing activities. Consequently the question in this study was, whether there is a significant relationship between the online information search and the actual travel behavior and how this is portrayed to confirm the importance of online information search.

To investigate this relationship analysis of log files of ten tourism-specific websites have been conducted. The tourism marketing information system TourMIS (www.tourmis.info), an open access information and decision support system for tourism managers, consultants, media, and students, has been extended to allow benchmarking of webanalytics data.
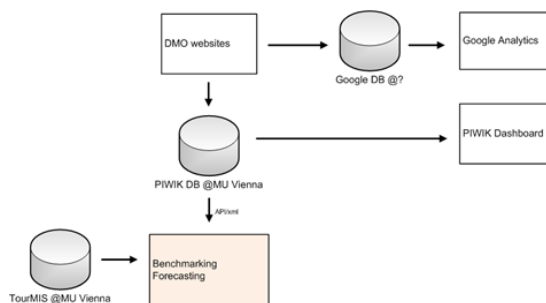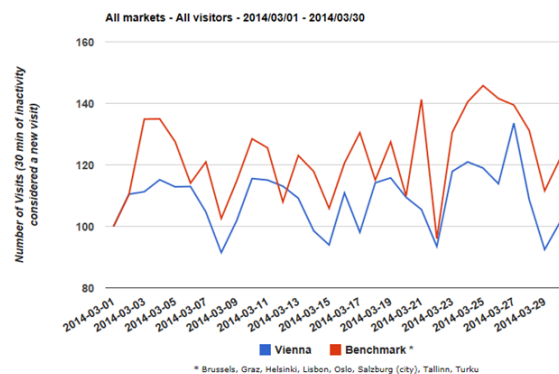

Fig. 1: Automatic data collection process

Fig. 2: Example of benchmarking opportunity in TourMIS

Figure 1 describes the automatic data collection process by javascript tagging of pages in real-time using the open source webanalytics software PIWIK. The information collected in PIWIK is combined with data from TourMIS, which includes tourism statistics entered by tourism managers. Figure 2 illustrates an example for the benchmarking opportunities available in TourMIS.

There are various research questions which stem from this new data source: (1) Who is using the website? (2) What are website users looking for? (3) Where are users coming from and going to before and after visiting the website? (4) When and how long has the website been accessed? (5) Can we predict tourism demand based on the number of visits on a destination's website?