

# How social media impacts on travel

As more people go digital, the avenues by which they communicate have evolved. First it was the telephone and then came electronic mail and now the fastest, most accessible way to interface with friends and loved ones is here to stay. Social media has made its way into the hearts and minds of the younger and older generations and it is not going away in the near future.



Sharing, as they say, is caring. People are sharing their thoughts, actions and desires on the web through social media, available for any leisure web surfer to peruse. There are over 200 social networking sites in the world. Avid social media users have found ways to fuel their curiosity of other worlds besides their own. The tourism space on social media is populated with several creators and curators, some unaware of their contribution.

Frequent travellers interact with social media differently at various stages of the travel cycle. About one in every five leisure travellers worldwide visits social media sites for travel inspiration.

## Searching for the perfect destination

First they fantasise about locations they want to visit by searching for the perfect destination for their intended purpose, be it to explore an African safari or just to relax on a sandy beach. The MD of Jovago.com, remarking on this trend, stated: "Africa is a huge tourist attraction. Unfortunately, before now, most of these attractions were not being fully explored because there were not enough people selling the African story. Now, with the proliferation of social media, discussion forums and blogs, more people are writing about Africa's tourism opportunities and, in turn, more people are discovering Africa."

Each travel stage is handled effectively on social networking sites where one can instantly contact trusted friends, colleagues and brands, leaving users with no reason to go beyond the social space. According to a report published by the European Travel Commission, in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region, 14% of leisure travellers use social media for travel inspiration, 14% when searching for hotels, 13% for vacation activities, 11% for restaurants and 10% for vacation activities.

In an age where 71% of adults online use Facebook, businesses have gone social to take advantage of the gold mine of potential customers and clients. Travel agencies have not been left behind; travel sites like Jovago.com have invested in their social media presence to promote amazing African destinations to the world.

## **Social Media Week Lagos**

Social media has an immense effect on the travel culture and attitudes of the older and younger generations. Almost every destination in the world has a social media page dedicated to it, with travel enthusiasts rooting for more people to come and visit. They organise local events to build awareness and encourage tourism. One of such events is Social Media Week, a global platform that connects people, content, and conversation around emerging trends in social and mobile media. Social Media Week is held in over 20 cities worldwide and will be holding in Lagos, Nigeria in February.

This year on Social Media Week Lagos, 24 February is dedicated to travel and Jovago will be on hand to educate Nigerians on travel trends and how social media is helping to shape the future of tourism in Africa at Defying Space and Time, Social Media Taking You (and your Business) Places. The MD, Marek Zmyslowski, will also be speaking at the event.

Social Media Week Lagos takes place from 23-27 February 2015 at the Landmark Centre, Oniru, Victoria Island, Lagos.

For more, go to [socialmediaweek.org/lagos](http://socialmediaweek.org/lagos)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>