

E-Tourism Africa Summit to promote online tourism in Africa

12 June 2013 saw the launch of the sixth Annual E-Tourism Africa Summit, which will take place on 9-10 September at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The summit, which is sponsored by South African Tourism, is an international gathering of experts on online tourism, such as Facebook, Trip Advisor, Expedia, Twitter, and will feature innovative speakers and solutions.



Damian Cook, the CEO of E-Tourism Frontiers, said it was vital that all tourism players continue to increase both their understanding and investment into the online sector. "Online travel bookings continue to grow globally, with bookings expected to reach over US\$400 billion this year, while 40% of total travel spending will now be online," said Cook, quoting statistics from online travel research firm, PhoCus Wright.

Mobile growth in emerging markets

Cook also outlined how online travel growth will increase in emerging markets. "The combination of increasing wealth among middle-class consumers and greater internet penetration and greater consumer confidence for online payments in emerging markets has led to the rapid increase in online travel sales. The great news for emerging markets, such as Africa, is that online travel and tourism is poised to experience solid growth over the next five years, with the Middle East and Africa leading the way in percentage terms, according to Euromonitor," said Cook.

Cook went on to say that online travel will also benefit from Africa's growth in mobile: "With mobile penetration across Africa expected to reach 80% later this year and smart-phone ownership currently around 17-19% of the continent, according to the 2012 African Mobile Factbook, online mobile travel sales will be very important for domestic and regional travel bookings," said Cook.

The E-Tourism Frontiers CEO said mobile continues to be very important: "We will take a closer look at mobile during the summit and we will also have very practical sessions on the second day of the summit, that will give the travel trade the opportunity to focus strongly on which social media campaigns, channels and online business opportunities work well in Africa and for their own markets."

Shifting business online

The event will also feature the announcement of the winner of the Africa App Quest, sponsored by Visa and South African Tourism. This continent-wide search for the best locally developed travel technology will see a US\$10,000 prize given to one of the finalists who will be presenting their solution to the E-Tourism Africa Summit audience.

William Price, global manager of e-marketing at South African Tourism, said that the Summit will be a great opportunity for the tourism sector to catch up with all the latest online technology. "We are delighted to be the title sponsors of the summit. We want to continue to show the tourism sector that shifting their business online is absolutely crucial. As part of our sponsorship package we will be giving the chance to 100 SMMEs to attend the summit on a complimentary basis. We also plan to unveil a Digital Academy at the summit that will be specially designed for our travel trade. We want to make moving online accessible and practical and the summit will be a great opportunity for everyone to learn what works online and the new trends and innovations that will help build our business for the future," said Price.

Registration for the E-Tourism Africa Summit is open now. For further information, go to www.e-tourismfrontiers.com.

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