



Festival Attendees and Twitter

What is the issue?

In the increasingly crowded field of festivals, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer new channels for attracting, communicating, and engaging festival attendees. What is the nature and scope of this interaction and how does it vary before, during, and after festival production?

What did the researcher do?

As the fastest growing social media platform, and one that is fueled by mobile (i.e. smartphone) technology, Twitter was chosen as the social media forum for analysis. This paper reports on a content analysis of tweets, the 140 character Twitter messages, pre, during, and post events at three festivals: Pride Toronto (2013), Taste of the Danforth (2013), and the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival (2013).

Why is this research Useful?

The research points to the need for festivals to take better advantage of post visit communication using twitter to maintain contact and to encourage visitors to continue processing their on-site experience, to evaluate their experience, and encourage repeat attendance.

What were the outcomes?

Findings highlight patterns of Twitter use in the festival context. Consistent with the immediacy of Twitter, most posts happened during the festivals with very little Twitter activity after the festivals ended. The nature of the tweet content was quite evenly distributed across promotional, informational, and conversational categories and did not vary by timeframe, suggesting opportunity for a more strategic approach to communication across festival stages.

About the Researcher

Dr. Kelly MacKay is Professor and Interim Associate Dean Research at the Ted Rogers School of Management. She is also President of the Travel and Tourism Research Association of Canada. Her work focuses on influences on tourists' behaviour, and most recently on IT and tourism.

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