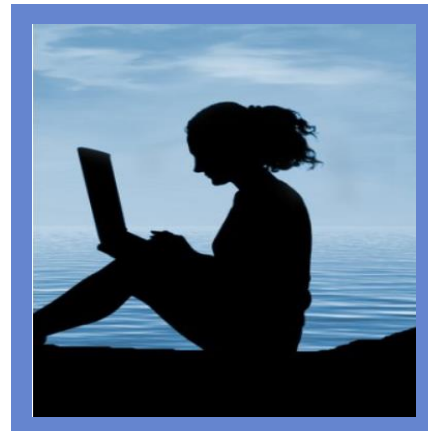




## National tourism organizations' online training offers and travel agents' perception

Role of eLearning Applications within the tourism and hospitality sector

October 3, 2013  
Barcelona



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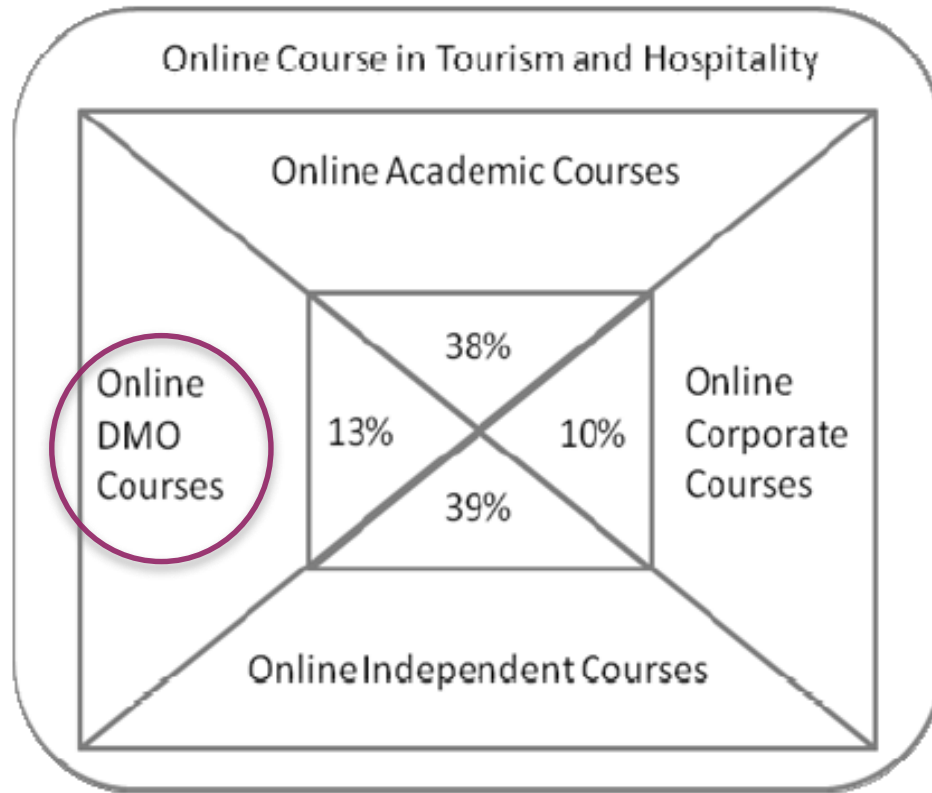


## research gap



- new concept of training
- growing interest by tourism practitioners (ABTA, 2012; Tnooz, 2011; Travel Market Report, 2011)
- limited attention from eLearning and eTourism scholars (e.g.: Braun & Hollick, 2006; Haven & Botterill, 2003; Baum & Sigala, 2001; AACE, 2009).
- no empirical research on HRM of travel trade and eLearning use for knowledge upgrade among travel agents





Cantoni, L., Kalbaska, N., & Inversini, A. (2009). eLearning in Tourism and Hospitality: A Map. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 8(2), 148-156.



## Research goals

1. Understand eLearning (eL) offer about national tourism destinations for travel agents
2. Recognise travel agents reaction on such offers and their motivations on attending eL courses



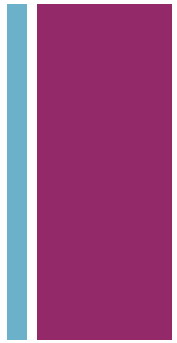
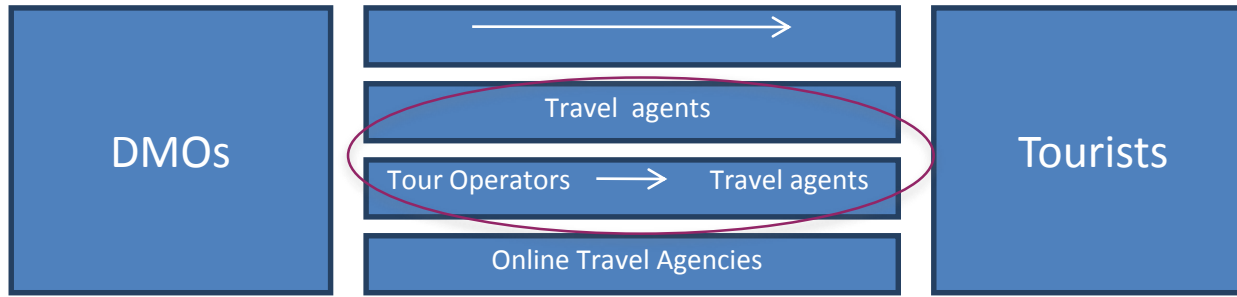


# Destination Management Organizations' eLearning offers and Travel Agents' perceptions and motivations





## **Phase 1. Benchmarking study**



### DMO needs

- coordinate all the partners/industries involved in the production/delivery of the tourist product
- spread clear, up to-date, appropriate and catchy messages
- add additional channels to impact the market
- save on training costs

### Travel Agents need

- overcome competition from OTAs
- satisfy the needs of a new consumer
- constant upgrade of knowledge and skills
- get certification
- can't leave their main business (SMEs, geographical location)



Destinational eLearning courses



## Phase 1. Benchmarking study\_1

**Goal:** Understand the issue statement and map eLearning offers by NTOs

**When:** Fall 2009 and 2012

**How:** content and functionalities analysis

<http://www.elearning4tourism.com/elearning-programs/>

**Model used:** triangular model of eLearning courses evaluation (Cantoni, et. al, 2007)

**Limitation:**

- Only English versions of courses were analysed
- Only courses provided by NTOs were taken into consideration



Preliminary benchmarking – autumn 2009



Benchmarking study – autumn 2012

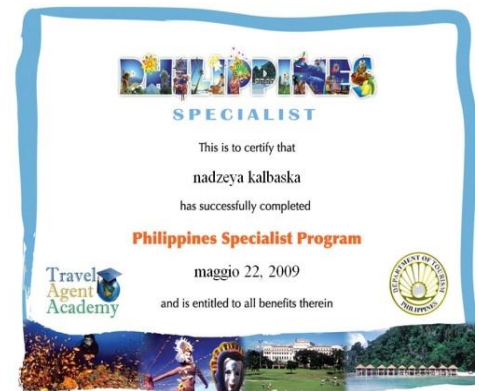
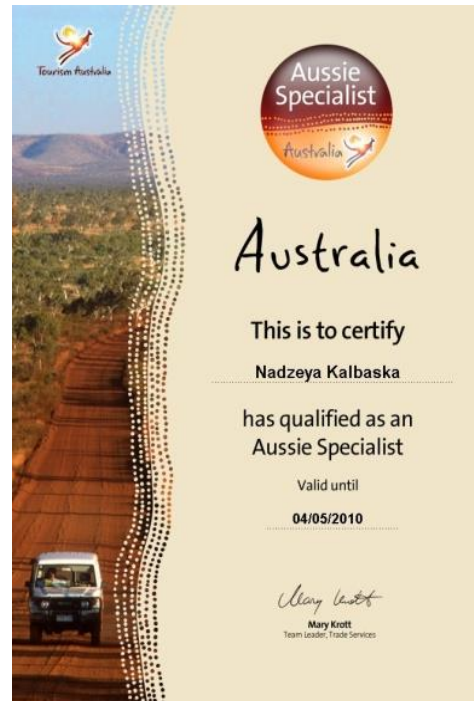
- Cantoni, L., & Kalbaska, N. (2010). eLearning Offers by Destination Management Organizations. In U. Gretzel, R. Law., & M. Fuchs (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp.247-259). Wien-New York: Springer
- Kalbaska, N. (2012). Travel Agents and Destination Management Organizations: eLearning as a strategy to train tourism trade partners. *Journal of Information Technology & Tourism*, 13(1), 1-12.





## Phase 1. Benchmarking study\_2

- **Main public:** Travel Agents/Travel consultants
- **Contents:** info about Destination (Geographical position, Demographics, Languages Spoken, etc.); History and Culture, Accommodation and Transportation; Formalities; Itinerary Planning; Selling tips
- **Methods and strategies:** text, video, glossary, suggested websites, interactive map
- **Time frame:** from 40' Mauritius Training Course to 25 -30 hours Explore New Zealand (average: 4-5 hours)
- **Costs:** Free of charge for travel agents, sponsored by a DMO





## Phase 2. Case studies



## Phase 2. Case studies\_1

**Goal:** Identify and present best practices in the field

**When:** February 2012 and 2013

**How:**

- semi structured interviews
- analysis of the usages
- available internal reports and historical data

**Model used:** ADDIE (-Analysis, -Design, -Development, -Implementation and Evaluation)

**Results:** interviews with the representatives of Swiss National Tourism Office and New Zealand Tourism



**Switzerland.**  
Specialist.



### History

First idea – 2004

First implementation – 2006.

International version +

**USA & Canada, China, Germany, India, UK/Ireland, Korea, Australia, Russia, Spain**

### Usages

German version - 3000 registered TAs since 2006

Indian version - 1347 registered since June 2011, 131 certified

Korean version - 60 registered in 2011, 0 certified

Chinese platform has certified 20TAs in 2011

US/ Canada platform - 38 certified

GCC - 10 certified travel agents

**Registration:** is needed

**8 training modules**

**Time:** Each seminar 2-4 h.



## Phase 2. Case studies\_2

### History

First idea – 2003

First implementation – 2004.

International version +

**India, Singapore/Malaysia & Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, UK & Europe, North America, China**

### Usages

Accounts - 28,383

Travel sellers in the database - 20,982

Certified agents - around 5000

Kiwi Specialists - 378

**Registration:** is needed to pass the tests

**10 mandatory modules** and **6 optional**

**Time:** Each seminar 2-3h.



## Phase 2. Case studies\_3

### Evaluation:

- Final exam consist of 30 multiple choice questions (database of 500/600 questions)
- 3 chances to pass

**Certificate:** valid forever

### Evaluation:

- 20 questions per training module. Need to get 100% to pass
- unlimited tries to pass

**Certificate:** valid for 2 years

To become **Kiwi Specialist** an agent needs to :

- complete 10 mandatory modules every 2 years
- make a trip to New Zealand
- attend another training activity (a market training or a webinar)





## Phase 4. Phone interviews



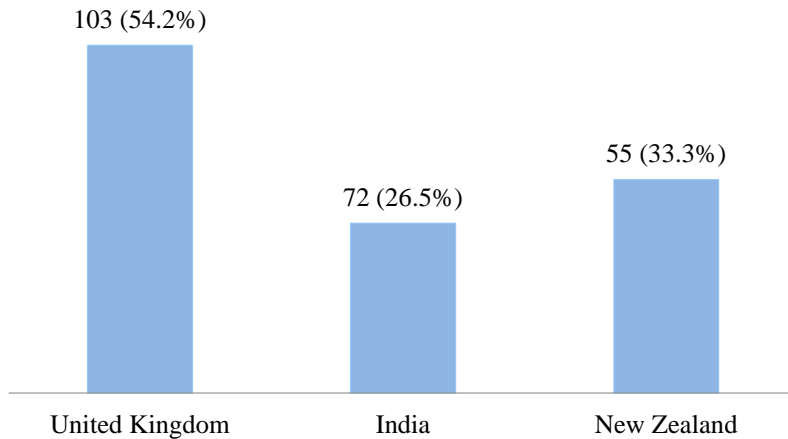
## Phase 4. Phone interviews\_1

**When:** Oct 2012 – Feb 2013

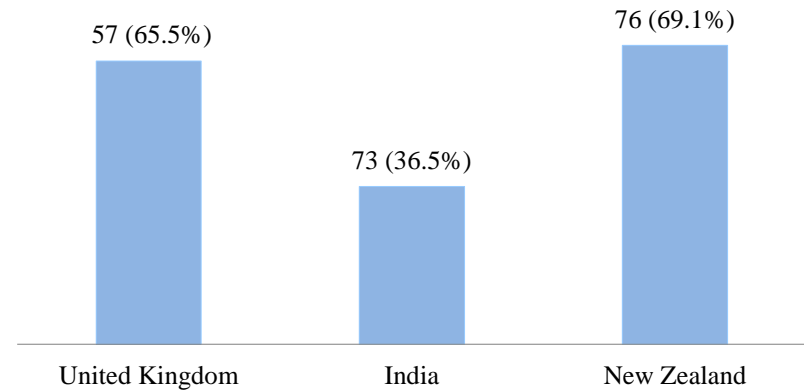
**How:** Simple random sampling of officially registered travel agents in the UK, India and NZ

**Respondents:** 1093 phone calls → 627 interviews

Country	United Kingdom	India	New Zealand
Number of calls done	341	364	388
Number of interviews done	190 (55%)	272 (75%)	165 (42%)



Rates of participation in destinational eL courses



Rates of awareness about destinational eL courses



## Phase 4. Phone interviews\_2

Full Factorial Model of the Univariate ANOVA showed that **participation in eL courses**

- depends on travel agents **origin** ( $p=.000$ ), **gender** ( $p=.006$ ) and **type of the agency** ( $p=.042$ ) they work for
- doesn't depend on the **age** ( $p=.236$ ) and **educational level** ( $p=.314$ )

Full Factorial Model of the Univariate ANOVA confirmed that **awareness about the existence of eL courses**

- depends on the **country of origin** ( $p=.000$ )
- doesn't depend on the **age** ( $p=.470$ ), **gender** ( $p=.071$ ), **type of the agency** ( $p=.086$ ) and **educational level** ( $p=.790$ )







# implications



## **Academic community**

- First empirical research in the field of HRM for travel trade and eLearning usages within on-the-job training in tourism industry;

## **Industrial community**

Better understanding of the eL offer by DMOs through the analysis of both:

- the supply side: evaluation of the existent eL practices
- the demand side: evaluation of the travel agents participations



**Thank you**

[www.elearning4tourism.com](http://www.elearning4tourism.com)

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