

# SMO and SMM Models of Tourist Area Promotion as a Form of Social Interaction in the Vital City Space



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**Abstract:** The article shows a significant role of social networks in the system of forms of social interaction in the vital city space. The task to identify the most popular platforms for promotion SMO and SMM – brands in the tourist area of a hero city Volgograd was chosen as the key tool. The study identified the effectiveness of priority methods of given marketing practices such as the community formation of brand of territory, work with blogosphere, reputation management, personal branding and extraordinary promotion. The conditions for the infinite social interaction are created in these forms in open ICT environment for the residents and the city guests who have common interests in urban space. The research has accomplished the following tasks such as identification of the most popular open platforms for SMO and SMM of tourist area brand promotion of a hero city Volgograd, detection of related communities, identification of a trust level to them, establishment of their purposes and the range of issues of their interest, places and attractions, related to the brand of territory; uncovering of factors and mechanisms which detect mood changing of the target audience and creation of methodological templates which allow to develop, implement and optimize SMO and SMM campaigns.

**Index Terms:** brand, SMM, SMO, social interaction, tourism, urban space.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays social media is an essential part of everyday life. It has been integrated in different social institutions and organizations. The opportunities in new forms of communication could not but be drawn on in the field of tourism and they can be applied in a variety of ways. Social networks are just one of a large amount of communication forms in the cyberspace. However, social networks play the most important role as a tool of professional and personal contacts.

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To date, social media marketing (SMM) is considered as the main element of tourism organization activity which qualifies for participation of competitive struggle of tourism service in the market and described as the work on the effective use of social networks in business. The development of SMM went along with the transformation of sites which had been the only platform for organizations in the Internet for a long time. It became the reason of creating SMO – a set of measures aimed at site transformation in order to improve its cooperation with social media [1]. The aim of our study was the analysis of social networks as the resource of brand development of the tourist area of a hero city Volgograd.

## II. METHODS

The analysis of existing studies shows that there is no a unitary evaluation system of effectiveness of the social networking use in tourism so far. Israeli researches conducted the online survey of tourist groups' participants in Facebook (N=903) and used its results to identify users' motivation. The study showed that social networks are used for the socio-psychological purpose of tourists-participants (formation of a group identity), but not for the functional purpose (information search). The status of participants in the group gave the greatest effect, but not one-time visits (not even long visits) [2]. In the different group of Israeli researches it was shown that the analysis of content of thematic groups in social networks allows identifying the latent factors of regional tourism. It was also revealed that the percentage of messages about tourism was higher in open groups than in closed ones where users' content was related to the theme of the group. The method used in the study allows identifying that the accommodation's conditions and availability of recreation parks are the priority issues of tour organization [3]. A team of Italian and Sweden scientists conducted an online survey of their compatriots in Facebook (N=426) and concluded that this social network is used for tourist information search more often than specialized websites. The study indicated that the social network use was not initiated by its convenience but because Facebook had the status of a reliable resource [4].



It is necessary to mention the separate study of “a substitutional tourism” as a phenomenon which appeared in social networks and meant the formation of a public opinion on the basis of private reviews and travel reports posted on social networks and forming five main forms (“direct substitution”, “dissociation”, “escapism”, “symbolism”, “turnover”) [5].

**III. ANALYSIS**

At this moment, the social networking market is stabilized in Russia and in the world and has a clear structure basing on regional and global networks. Facebook takes the leading role in the US market as well as in European cyberspace. In Russia and in a number of other countries, regional networks still play an important part. “Vkontakte” and “Odnoklassniki” are the examples of these networks for our country. The part of the audience uses “status” networks which were created in the similar way with basic social networks but with a clear emphasis in some functions of basic ones (Instagram, Twitter). Ten years ago, blogosphere was selected as an individual market segment with a clear reference to “Life journal” source, but now the term “blogger” has blurred and “Life journal” is not the monopolistic platform for blogging anymore. Thus, three kinds of communication in the cyberspace as factors of

tourism development can be distinguished for our country. They are Western cluster, Russian cluster and a website.

It should be noted as a required remark that SMM and SMO technologies are often an additional but not a priority resource and a method of customer retention. A lot of travel agencies, which have already accumulated their own customer base, do not try to expand the market totally and work with the chosen tourist group face-to-face. For this reason, many travel agencies of Volgograd, specializing in outbound tourism, passively use social media.

As the examples of SMM and SMO use, it is reasonable to review the structures for which inbound tourism is the main source of income, and the customer base requires constant expansion and renewal.

In the first case, the object is the museum-panorama "The Battle of Stalingrad." In addition to the website which has constantly updated information, the museum is represented in six social networks. Taking this work approach as a model, a primary analysis of the presence in social networks of several large centers of culture and tourism in Volgograd city was conducted for March 2019 (see Table I).

**Table I. Comparative analysis of the audience of social networks**

	“The Battle of Stalingrad”	“Old Sarepta”	Planetarium	The museum of Local History
Vkontakte	4032	5565	3418	295
Facebook	875	794	X	285
Odnoklassniki	2236	1272	X	X
Twitter	2366	1272	X	X
Instagram	2025	1404	X	421
Youtube	138	23	X	X

The social networking presence can be determined by several factors which include not only the popularity of the advertised object, but also the amount of funds of promotion in social media and work with the audience and others. It is also fair to mention that the indicator of the number of subscribers is also not the only one thing which can access the quality of the resource promotion. Nevertheless, the information provided by us allows us to draw certain conclusions about the specifics of working with SMO in Volgograd.

First of all, it is important to note that English-language versions of pages in social networks are not available, as opposed to the websites of organizations. Obviously, in the case of a static version of the website, translation of the basic segments is enough to understand, but it is much more difficult to do it in social networks. It should be noted, as an example, that the website of the museum “The Battle of Stalingrad” contains a large amount of information which is not translated in subsections of the website and it does not let the person leave the review if he cannot speak Russian.

The second point relates to the obvious dominance of the “Vkontakte” network over other resources. It can be explained by its orientation to Russian-speaking audience and

also more user-friendly working interface than other social networks. At the same time, the comments are disabled in the groups of “Old Sarepta” museum and The museum of Local History which make these resources duplicates websites but not the feedback means as on other resources. It should be noted that the websites of western museums and cultural centers have links to resources like TripAdvisor where it is possible to read reviews and see rating, but the resources mentioned by us do not have these links. At the same time, all these institutions are presented there.

The third point relates to the fact that a significant part of the content in social networks and on the website is not different. So, taking into account the ignoring of comments, social networks are losing their main advantages such as feedback, dynamic assessment and communication. It is partly implemented in the group of the museum “The battle of Stalingrad”, where the regional events are highlighted and they focus on the museum’s theme.



#### IV. RESULTS

The study identified the effectiveness of priority methods of given marketing practices such as the community formation of brand of territory, work with blogosphere, reputation management, personal branding and extraordinary promotion. The conditions for the infinite social interaction are created in these forms in open ICT environment for the residents and the city guests who have common interests in urban space.

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