

The effectiveness of the destination websites in promoting linkages between visitors and the community in Tonga

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ABSTRACT

Whilst tourism has brought Tonga potentially significant prospects for job creation and local business ownership, many tourists lack knowledge about the cultural experiences on offer at their holiday destination. This signifies a lost opportunity to form linkages between foreign tourists and the Tongan community. This study analysed the content of 40 Tongan websites to see how effectively they promoted linkages to community based tourism industries. It found the majority of websites had very weak content on local handicrafts, food and cultural events and were ineffective at promoting linkages between tourists and the community, thereby reducing the potential for local community participation in the tourism industry.

Keywords: *Tonga, community participation, internet, linkages, websites*