

**Through the photo-chromic Lens of the  
Beholder:  
The Development of the simple Holiday  
Photography to a Marketing Product**

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Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Professor Dipl.-Ing. Stefan Gindl

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Vienna, June 12th 2013

## Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

June 16<sup>th</sup> 2013



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## **Abstract**

Photography accompanies tourism ever since, while social media are nowadays forming an integral part of the individuals' everyday lives and of business reality. For the first time, through the advent of the new phenomenon Instagram, both spheres, i.e. photography and social media are integrated. Instagram, as mobile phone-based photo software, enables consumers to take and upload pictures onto the Internet instantaneously, hence enables individuals to share pictures of daily life moments including their travel experiences. Instagram does not only serve the average consumer in his or her personal life as a tourist, but could also originate considerable potential in terms of economic use in the tourism industry, including destination management and related businesses. This thesis attempts to put Instagram into the wider context of tourism photography, to investigate its scope and potential and to review the perception of tourism promoters of the software as a potential marketing tool.

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## List of Abbreviations

B2C: Business to Consumer

C2B: Consumer to Business

C2C: Consumer to Consumer

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction and Background**

Tourism and photography form an inevitable symbiosis – people travel in order to take pictures or, as in most cases, people take pictures whilst travelling.

Since the first photo “View from the window at Le Gras” was taken in 1826 by Joseph Nicéphore (nationalgeographic, n.d.), the evolution of this medium seemingly is not subject to limitations, neither in terms of growth nor in its artistic expression. Since “the Lumière brothers would inaugurate a new era in the medium of photography: the Age of Color” (Okuefuna, 2008, p. 9), it can be said that color images undoubtedly advanced photography to a new level also in terms of use in tourism. From this moment onwards, the scenery presented itself in its genuine colors and shadings. Ever since then, photography can be seen as an accompaniment of nearly any touristic activity.

## **1.2 Problem Definition**

With the rapid development of social media platforms, photo imaging by consumers experienced an enormous proliferation. Instagram, having become part of the Facebook Group in April 2012, announced at the beginning of 2013 highly impressive numbers of users’ coverage; by that date, it had 100 million monthly active users posting some 40 million photos per day, reacting in 8.500 “likes” and 1.000 comments per second, announced by Instagrams Press Department, 2013 (Instagram, 2013). In this context, it is important to take notice that a significant segment of tourism relates to young travelers of the age group between 16 and 35, probably being largely identical with the user group of social media.

During the last decade, the evolution of social media clearly outgrew the so far orthodox ways and means of marketing touristic products and brands. Traditionally, businesses were successfully marketing their own images based on their respective self-projections and along the lines of their self-defined marketing concepts. With the advent of Instagram and similar software applications consumers are now able of taking a holiday photo and communicating it instantaneously in the Internet to the

widest possible audience. With technical devices and social media continuously advancing, it is becoming increasingly challenging tourism enterprises to keep pace with how consumers view their holidays, assess their chosen destinations, and communicate their experiences to other potential travelers. From this development, one could conclude that there is an ongoing shift-of-control in the process of visual marketing from producers to consumers.

Hence, the question arises as to what extent holiday photography as user-generated content would affect the marketing of destination management organizations and related businesses.

### **1.3 Research Gap**

Albeit fields indirectly related to the topic of this thesis, namely photography and social media, are for many years subject to extensive research, the correlation between photography in tourism and communication by way of social media appears to be a fairly new field for academic studies. This is probably the result of the speeding development during the recent years in the domain of electronic media and devices such as mobile phones, now also used for the purposes of daily life and tourism photography. Today, Facebook is the widest-spread social media platform. Tourism enterprises use the latter already extensively. Facebook acquired the software developer company of Instagram in April 2012, (explained in detail in the following chapter 2.4.3 “Instagram and Facebook”) and little is known so far of the effects of this important acquisition on the behavior of users as well as of businesses.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The focus of the thesis’ research is placed on the usability of Instagram for the purposes of tourism businesses in the first place as software directly being part of Facebook and to a limited extent in the context of similar social media platforms, e.g. Twitter.

In appraising Instagrams potential for commercial purposes, the thesis poses the question of the reaction by tourism enterprises to the flourishing market of social media and whether the developments in the Internet are perceived by tourist enterprises as a commercial opportunity or as a threat. Instagram could be

perceived as a modern way of communication for destination management organizations and businesses. Should it be confined to being a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) crossing point, develop to a business-to-consumer (B2C) path or even become a consumer-to-business (C2B) communication, similar to Facebook's evolution? One area of research covers the question of tourism enterprises actively influencing the consumers' perception about a destination. To appreciate the commercial possibilities of Instagram fully, the thesis provides an insight into the technical possibilities of the software from a user's perspective, i.e. the filters by which a perceived atmosphere could be created.

Furthermore, the thesis tries to appraise the value of a photo to its owner, to other viewers and to touristic enterprises. In a final question, the thesis will address if Instagram could be a useful instrument for destination management organizations and related businesses in terms of a leap from a more common use of social media and professional photography to a marketing product by means of using photos taken by the consumers themselves.

## **1.5 Aim of this Bachelor Thesis**

By putting Instagram into the wider context of holiday photography, the aim of the thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of this Internet phenomenon and as an initial step towards the identification of this software's potential for the use by enterprises in the tourism industry.

## **1.6 Study Approach**

Responding to the defined research questions as per 1.4. above, a primary as well as a secondary research through nine individual interviews with ten respondents and a literature review were conducted. To provide a full understanding of all related issues, the literature review comprised topics such as (i) photography in tourism and in social media, (ii) social media and marketing in tourism and (iii) Instagram. The interviews aimed at qualitative findings rather than creating a quantitative sampler in response to the issues raised, i.e. no statistics.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Photography**

#### **2.1.1 Lomography and Polaroid – Instagram’s Ancestors**

The wish list of what an amateur photographer would expect from his camera in the limited time of use during tourist activities probably has not changed largely in the last decades of the development of mass tourism.

Most probably, the consumer wants a robust and reliable device, that is easy to handle and that delivers artistic and appealing images and probably most importantly he or she would like to be able to share the snapshots as fast as possible with other viewers. Nowadays, this has become a possibility by virtue of the mobile phones in combination with suitable photo software applications.

The elder generation however, may recall rushing straight from arrival at home to the photo shops to get the 24x36 mm films developed quickly after returning from their holiday in order to be able to put together a Dia slide show, or to stick the pictures with little transparent photo-corners into their photo albums.

Today’s web-based abilities allow a sharing of high-quality pictures of holiday impressions with a wide audience the moment a snapshot is taken. In tourists’ amateur photography, two developments are milestones to what Instagram is able deliver to its users, namely Kodak’s Instamatic cameras and the Polaroid system. Instagram’s digital world replicates several features of each of these somewhat historic analogous systems.

The below table summarizes some basic data of the three products depicting desirable features of the respective product from a tourist’s point of view as a consumer.

	<b>Instamatic</b>	<b>Polaroid</b>	<b>Lomography</b>	<b>Instagram</b>
<b>Year of introduction</b>	<i>1963</i>	<i>1937</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>2011/12</i>
<b>Broad-based use</b>	<i>mid 60s to late 80s</i>	<i>Revival some years ago</i>	<i>ongoing</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
<b>Promoter</b>	<i>Kodak</i>	<i>Polaroid LLC</i>	<i>Lomography</i>	<i>Facebook</i>
<b>Underlying System</b>	<i>Analogue</i>	<i>Analogue</i>	<i>Analogue</i>	<i>Mobile App</i>
<b>User-friendliness in terms of transport</b>	<i>o.k.</i>	<i>limited</i>	<i>o.k.</i>	<i>good</i>
<b>Robustness and ease of handling</b>	<i>o.k.</i>	<i>limited</i>	<i>o.k.</i>	<i>good</i>
<b>Reliability in use</b>	<i>o.k.</i>	<i>limited</i>	<i>limited</i>	<i>excellent</i>
<b>Speed of access to end product</b>	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>immediately</i>	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>immediate</i>
<b>Ability to view or share product immediately</b>	<i>no</i>	<i>yes, limited</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>yes</i>
<b>Ability to create quasi-professional quality for photos by means of photochromic filters etc.</b>	<i>no</i>	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>yes</i>

**Table 1 Comparison Instamatic, Lomography, Polaroid, Instagram**

Instamatic is the name of a type of easy-shot camera, launched by the American company Kodak in the early 60s of the last century (Kodak, 2012). Its name derives from a combination of the words “instant” with “automatic” (Anon., 1964), hence it resembles in a way the word Instagram. It was specifically developed by Kodak for the use by amateur and holiday photographers (Kemplen, 2012), who did not expect high picture quality. The main feature of the system was its user-friendliness by allowing to set aperture and speed by simple symbols and to change the film more easily than in the usual 24x36 mm cameras by using a snap-in cassette (Anon., 1964). After reaching quite a high market penetration mainly amongst holiday travelers, Instamatic became gradually outdated by more advanced systems and Kodak discontinued its production in the beginning of the 90s. (Anon., 2012)

At the time of World War II, Edwin Land invented in the US a chemical process for developing instant photos and created a company for his product, named Polaroid (Bonanos, 2012). Developing a photo within a matter of minutes in the camera itself and without having to go to a photo shop was an enormous leap forward for all holiday photographers. For the first time, amateur holiday snap-shooters could view the results of their photographic efforts immediately after having pressed the buttons of their cameras. The price for this wonderful experience was, however, a limited quality of the product, a quite bulky camera and no possibility to modify or enhance the product as photos could only be reproduced in the same format that the camera would technically allow. Polaroid as a US corporation went into receivership under Chapter 11 and was re-established in 2001 for the purposes of entering the digital photography markets. (DWK, 2008)

With their reasonable prices for the cameras, reflecting the limited quality of the equipment both described systems had been designed for the purposes of amateur use. The companies clearly were taking advantage of the then evolving mass tourism as driver of their own corporate development, however, both also disappeared as they were overtaken by new technological developments, particularly in the digital field of photography as it opened up to users after the turn of the century.

Lomography, a brand that sells reproductions of historic Russian cameras experienced its hype in the past years. It all started approximately twenty years ago in Vienna (Lomography, n.d.). Exchange students detected a used Lomo compact automatic camera in a shop and started taking pictures with it. The developed pictures showed vigorous colors which they did not expect, and raised the interest of friends in the old camera (Lomography, n.d.). Some of the students decided to build a business on the grounds of this expressed interest, flew to St. Petersburg and entered into an agreement with the original Russian producer of the cameras. This allowed them a franchise to market and sell replica cameras on a worldwide basis (Lomography, n.d.).

Soon an “analogue movement” followed, turning an old-fashioned camera to a brand new lifestyle product. Twenty years later, Lomography perceives itself as an

organization and lifestyle culture that promotes creativity and design combining low-tech and high-tech elements in modern analogue photography.

Instagram is playing in another league. As a software-based application designed for the use in a portable phone, it is available to its users on a permanent basis. With highest digital quality of the product, it is superior to any analogous film-based photo system and, most importantly, it can immediately be shared with everybody who owns a portable phone, a laptop or a PC. The product can easily be enhanced or altered by using many photo-chromic filters etc., embedded in the system for this purpose.

The idea of instant photography is not new, thinking of Polaroid and Instamatic. Instagram, however, advances it a level further: Pictures cannot only be viewed immediately but can also be shared with friends and family instantaneously, independent from location.

### **2.1.2 Photography in Tourism**

According to Bourdieu (1983) the individual uses his or her photo camera most frequently during trips (Bourdieu, 1983). However, one could assume a slight shift in the frequency of photography and the circumstances of events since the recent emergence of smart phones with their integrated cameras. This suggestion does not contradict Bourdieu's (1966) observation on the evolving importance of photography during holidays for the individual (Bourdieu, 1966).

Eva Maria Raab (2007) conducted her research in the field of socio-cultural and behavioral aspects of touristic photography (Raab, 2007). She (2007) states that according to tourism sciences the tourist's gaze and perception, hence photography, is influenced by media such as billboards and magazines (Raab, 2007). In her thesis Eva Maria Raab referred to Bourdieu (1983) who sees five motivating factors for taking photos, namely an attempt to freeze time, as a medium for the purpose of communication, to satisfy the desire of artistic and technical self realization, to achieve social recognition and as distraction and escape from day-to-day life (Bourdieu, 1983). Eva-Maria Raab added further considerations of her own,



interpreting the English term of literally “taking a picture” as almost “acquiring” space.

The human brain operates predominantly on basis of pictures rather than abstract concepts, thinking of how the individual remembers and dreams. Hence taking pictures is a way of building bridges for memorizing (Starl, 1995). Photography does not only serve as archive for memories for the individual but should also assimilate as a tool of evidence as Gisèle Freund states (Freund, 1976). Eva Maria Raab (2007) concludes in her research paper that the society expects photographic activities to be conducted during holidays (Raab, 2007). Susan Sontag (2001) expresses another useful view, she feels that making an experience almost becomes identical with taking a photo and further participating in a public event is increasingly tantamount to viewing photos of such (Sontag, 2001). The individual however, inclines to be interested mostly in those pictures depicting him or her in an attractive manner (Turner, 1992).

Since digital photography is part of today’s lifestyle, pictures are stored digitally. This led to the loss of the storytelling character, for some years now, though individuals upload images on weblogs, which function like a digital diary that is publically accessible (Raab, 2007).

Photography in tourism may underlie different motives and inspirations; holidays however, no longer serve to discover the unknown but function to experience oneself (Raab, 2007).

### **2.1.3 Social Media Photography**

Since the last decade, photography has evolved to a new communication channels, as mobile phones are equipped with built-in cameras. Individuals are able to take pictures and upload them immediately by applying simply a few steps to a social network software, this possibility introduced a new social behavior (Irrgang & Piantoni, 2011). The latter is encouraged by the increasing acquisition of mobile phones that provide features such as Internet and cameras and the implementation of social networks in daily life (Irrgang & Piantoni, 2011). Sabine Irrgang and Laura Piatoni (2011) feel that these new gadgets and the fairly newly defined use of the internet have introduced a new way of communication (Irrgang & Piantoni, 2011).

This is a very strong supposition, one could rather suggest that new devices invented satisfy the natural human need or want to communicate, thinking of postcards sent by tourists depicting themselves and holding a short message on the back that they sent to family members or friends. Communication however, has become much faster and multi-way in the past decades.

Lo et al. (2011) stated that only a few tourists upload their pictures online, whereas most tourists do take pictures while travelling (Lo, et al., 2011). One can propose that this behavior has already undergone a shift since the implementation of applications such as Instagram and the Internet on mobile phones. Boley et al. (2013) conducted a research on souvenir purchasing behavior and picture posting of travelers detecting that those who upload pictures will most probably buy souvenirs as proof and as presents differently, than those who do not (Boley, et al., 2013). Lo et al. (2011), also state that Web 2.0 will increase in relevance also to destination marketing and branding

## 2.2 Social Media as a Definition

Comparing to the classic ways of communication, such as mail or telephone calls, social media present a young channel of communication, - yet they are already firmly established in today's world. Despite their novelty, social media are in use not only by the young generation of "screenagers", but also by the so-called generation X (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Millions of people use social media in daily life and have somewhat of an idea of how to explain the term, however, it would appear useful to define it more clearly up-front for the purposes of this thesis.

"Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social media vary in their form of application (Kietzmann, et al., 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The users have the opportunity to interact, configure content, interchange thoughts, information, add visual or audio material on social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, et al., 2011; Takaffoli, et al., 2011).

Social media do not only act as platforms for data transmission among users, but differ in the manner of use and reach; some aim to reach the average consumers, others are designed to function as professional networks and others again serve as media sharing platforms i.e. YouTube or Flickr (Kietzmann, et al., 2011).

Further social media distinguish themselves by their extent to which they facilitate social exposure of the users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The latter seek to design a likeliness that matches his or her character. However, one could also suggest that some users aim to demonstrate an image of how they would like to be seen by others; common blogs, which can be seen as a mediated version of a diary (Raab, 2007) or personal networking sites, like Twitter, can emphasize this intention.

Summarizing social media provide individuals or businesses a channel to communicate and inform each other; additionally they furnish an opportunity of expressing and presenting themselves in a desired manner, via messages, pictures, music or videos.

### **2.2.1 Web based Media as a Marketing tool**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, individuals use social media as channels for the exchange of information, for interaction and the expression of ideas. It was just a matter of time, however, that businesses mainly operating in the field of brands, hence seeking for the consumer contiguity, recognized the opportunity of social media. The latter provides consumers to become part of a brand community that allows them to interchange their adulation for a brand independently from geographical boundaries (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). However the communication is not only limited amongst consumers but heading to a consumer-to-business information exchange and vice versa in a pronounced kind (Zaglia, 2012). Further brand communities were initiated to facilitate the customer relationship, as a one-to-one relationship was not always expedient (Laroche, et al., 2012).

In addition, social media enhance the connection of businesses to end-consumers instantaneously whilst keeping this marketing strategy at a very low cost expenditure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However this shift in marketing has also evoked a loss of influence from the marketers and those who work in the public relation industry and got relocated to the individuals (Kietzmann, et al., 2011) thus businesses officiate as a curator dealing with the posted subjects (Kietzmann, et al., 2011).

Social media have become an ideal platform for marketing and advertising strategies integrating the end-consumers as multipliers and circulators. This however results in new obligations and responsibilities for consumers as well as enterprises.

### **2.2.2 Social Media as a Marketing Tool in Tourism**

Tourism goes back as far as two thousand years or even longer, while tourism marketing and in particular, destination branding started only some twenty years ago. Branding in terms of marketing communicates an image of a destination to tourists. Social media as a communication tool can enhance the image of a destination and interact actively with possible tourists (De Moya & Jain, 2013). The consumer behavior can be affected differently via social media when compared to offline-channels, as they have the possibility to obtain different angles of opinions;

this also has an effect on the potential consumption of a destination (O'Connor, et al., 2008).

Technological developments are identified as one of the six most important drivers in the evolution of tourism industry (Dwyer et al., 2009). The implementation of social media and technologies in the everyday life of consumers challenge those who work in the tourism industry while social media provide new alternatives (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). The input of tourists by way of social media simply functions as a word of mouth; hence, it will help marketing as other consumers also have access to social media platforms (Scott, 2010). Tourists no longer act as simple consumers but as producers and distributors of relevant economic information (Månsson, 2011), as they actively take part in social networking by adding comments images and expressing wishes for instance (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Larsen, 2006).

In this context, the correlation between tourists as consumers of a product and their role as marketers of the same is increasingly becoming a target for academic research.

Maria Månsson (2011) elaborated in her essay "Mediatized Tourism" on the new media concept of "convergence". The concept deals with the correlation of the tourist's role as consumer and producer of media content (Månsson, 2011). Furthermore, she and Jenkins (2006) suggest that this concept of convergence entails a synchronous use of various media channels in a commercial process (Jenkins, 2006; Månsson, 2011). Both authors observe that, typically, this effect is multiplied by consumer-to-consumer interactions: "Thus, online social media are arenas where new interactions and productions between tourists are made, albeit that these processes can take place in other ways." (Månsson, 2011, p. 1647). It is probably fair to assume that this concept would be applicable to Instagram as well, in particular to a certain tourist space as its "entry point to the consumption" (Månsson, 2011, p. 1648). Månsson further dwells on her idea of a proliferation of information available to tourists today, "as various media products are interwoven and people consume them in a multitude of ways" (Månsson, 2011, p. 1648).

Jenkins (2006) identified new communication channels as powerful tools for consumers, tantamount to the strengths of producer-driven marketing. “Convergence represents a paradigm shift – a move from medium-specific content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 243). Since the traveler acts as a consumer but also a provider of information nowadays distributed online, the tourism industry is forced to adapt to the tourist’s wish for enhanced transparency (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). This new trend, on the other hand, allows the industries to support advertising and promotion efforts economically (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). The said authors (2013) suggest social media as being a field of particular relevance for young travelers, effectively taking the place the traditional hard-selling way of marketing (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Consumers’ behavior and in particular their decisions regarding desirable destinations are increasingly influenced by social media and opinions communicated on online platforms (O’Connor et al., 2008).

Another observation of relevance to tourism industry deals with the idea of “time-space compression” through new technologies, elaborated in “Networks and Tourism” (Larsen, et al., 2007). Individuals even though being located geographically elsewhere can communicate cheaper and more efficiently than a few years ago (Larsen, et al., 2007), Harvey (1989) names that of real-time communication phenomenon time-space-compression (Harvey, 1989).

Applying this thought to auto-marketing by social media, nowadays tourists are put into the position of being able to communicate their experiences instantaneously by way of internet technologies through images apart from other media.

Modern tourism photography visualizes the word of mouth by travelers and at times has the potential to reinforce it; albeit being of user-generated content, uploaded pictures can be criticized (Månsson, 2011). In general, social media allocate credibility to informational content (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Increasingly, the basic producer-driven marketing is put to a test by tourists’ participation in internet activities.

## 2.3 Facebook and Twitter from a marketing perspective

### 2.3.1 Facebook

Two big social media platforms that correlate with Instagram are Facebook and Twitter. The latter was a driver for Instagram's success in the beginning (Firsching, 2013) and Facebook made it to one of the biggest photo sharing agencies (Der Standard, 2012). The use of Facebook among individuals is commonly known, however, it is interesting to introduce studies conducted that dealt with the utilization of Facebook in sectors in the business and tourism industry. Essi Pöyry et al. (2013) performed a research on the behavioral motivations of customers using Facebook in terms from liking to buying (Pöyry, et al., 2013). Businesses too, make use of Facebook, generating most of the content on the page themselves, hence the site simulates with the homepage and ordinary weblogs, whereas Facebook allows active participation of the customers, who therefore contribute to the pages content (Pöyry, et al., 2013). Pöyry et al. (2013) conclude that Facebook pages with sufficient and good information can improve the businesses accomplishing results as visitors may use Facebook similarly to common web pages as a source of information, this theory, however, involves one limitation in that many individuals visit Facebook, but do not purchase a product (Pöyry, et al., 2013). Yu-Lun Hsu (2012) however states, that Facebook can evolve to a good prospect in electronic marketing concerning on interstate marketing, if the attitude of the businesses towards Facebook positive and is accepted as a strategic tool (Hsu, 2012). Hsu (2012) concentrated on hotels in Taiwan, mentioning that the English language is mostly used on Facebook and can improve the latter as a marketing tool, further the hotels have the possibility to transform site visitors to potential vendees (Hsu, 2012). This conclusion could also be applicable to other businesses in the tourism segment and may be enhanced by the use of Instagram.

An additional issue concerning tourism in the perspective of social media is the communication of destination images. Maria De Moya and Rajul Jain (2013) researched the effectiveness of branding through Facebook on the example of Brazil and Mexico. They found that both destinations realize their image on their Facebook page and that the "friends" (on Facebook) interacted with the destination promoters (De Moya & Jain, 2013). Summing up De Moya and Jain (2012) suggest that the

interaction with Facebook “friends” ad value in terms of emotional affinity (De Moya & Jain, 2013).

### **2.3.2 Twitter**

Twitter is a real-time micro blogging social media platform that allows consumers as well as businesses to upload information, known as “tweets”, of a maximum of 140 characters (Twitter, 2013). Oussalah et al. (2013) compare Twitter to the “former” short-mail-service, which in its original form allowed for 160 characters (Oussalah, et al., 2013). Twitter gives users the possibility to be part of a community but without commitment. One user can follow the others’ whereabouts whereas he does not have to interact with the one following him, Oussalah et al. (2013) referred to this as “follow-and-to-be-followed” (Oussalah, et al., 2013, p. 107). Eileen Fischer and Rebecca Reuber (2011) researched in the field of social interaction via Twitter putting their focus on entrepreneurs concluding that Twitter among other social media sites can be used as a tool to amend brand images, revenues and reputation, if applied accordingly (Fischer & Reuber, 2011).

Hughes et al. (2012) conducted a study comparing the sociability of Facebook and Twitter and came to the conclusion that they feature different behavioral attitudes from users (Hughes, et al., 2012). Hence, “different people use the same sites for different purposes” (Hughes, et al., 2012, p. 568).

### **2.4 Instagram**

As Instagram is a fairly new phenomenon, scientific literature is scarce, hence the main source of information is withdrawn from blogs and online news centres as for instance “handelsblatt.com” and “cnbc.com”.

Still in its early stage of development, Kevin Systrom co-founder of Instagram and his team knew that the horizon of Instagram could become limitless as they state on [blog.instagram.com](http://blog.instagram.com): “We believe it’s the beginning of something bigger. When we started working on Instagram, we tried to imagine what the world would be like if everyone could contribute to an open, transparent, and international community” (Systrom, 2011). Only a few years ago this idea would have been perceived as



science fiction, however, the previous sentence also suggests a new vision of globalization.

#### **2.4.1 The beginning of Instagram: Burbn**

Kevin Systrom recounts at quora.com (2010) that the idea of Instagram developed while he was still operating in marketing at Nextstop working on engineering simple ideas that would help him to understand how to program. “One of these ideas was combining elements of Foursquare (check-ins) with elements of Mafia Wars (hence the name “Burbn”) (Systrom, 2010). He assumed to install a prototype of the idea in HTML5 and promote it to friends (Systrom, 2010). Having met the right people at the right time, including Mike Krieger, Kevin Systrom compiled Burbn into a private HTML5 mobile app that would allow checking into locations, earn points for meeting friends and post pictures. Taking a closer look at their product, the founders of Burbn perceived their app as confusingly snowed under with very different features, so they decided to concentrate exclusively on the app’s picture function – calling it from now on an instant telegram (Systrom, 2010). Renaming Burbn into Instagram seemingly makes sense, as the current name grasps its functions in one word.

As is proven yet again by Instagram’s advent, business is all about meeting the right people at the right time, one of those people included is Adam D’ Angelo a former chief technology officer at Facebook (Sengupta, et al., 2012).

“The extraordinary success of Instagram is a tale about the culture of the Bay Area tech scene, driven by a tightly woven web of entrepreneurs and investors who nurture one another’s projects with money, advice and introductions to the right people” (Sengupta, et al., 2012). Coming back to Mr. D’ Angelo, he had helped Systrom to find engineers, establish databases and to elaborate functions; last but not least Mr. D’ Angelo invested into Instagram, just like Jack Dorsey, a founder of Twitter and Mr. Andreessen, who got introduced by a colleague at Google (Sengupta, et al., 2012). It seems that Instagram does not only owe its success to the biggest social networks worldwide but that its promoters seem to network the old way.

## 2.4.2 Instagram: Numbers and Facts

MG Siegler (2011), a columnist at techcrunch.com stated in 2011 that Instagram has 5 million users, adding each month another 625,000 users since it went on-stream in 2010 (Siegler, 2011), a figure that is approximately 100.000 larger than the population of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, just in terms of comparison. Siegler (2011) also predicted that the 10 million user mark would already be exceeded by the end of 2011 (Siegler, 2011), keeping in mind that Instagram was only founded one year before. The Instagram team confirmed this assumption officially beginning of 2012 (Instagram, 2012).

The following abstract will refer to statistical research from May 13, 2012, just some weeks after Facebook acquired Instagram.

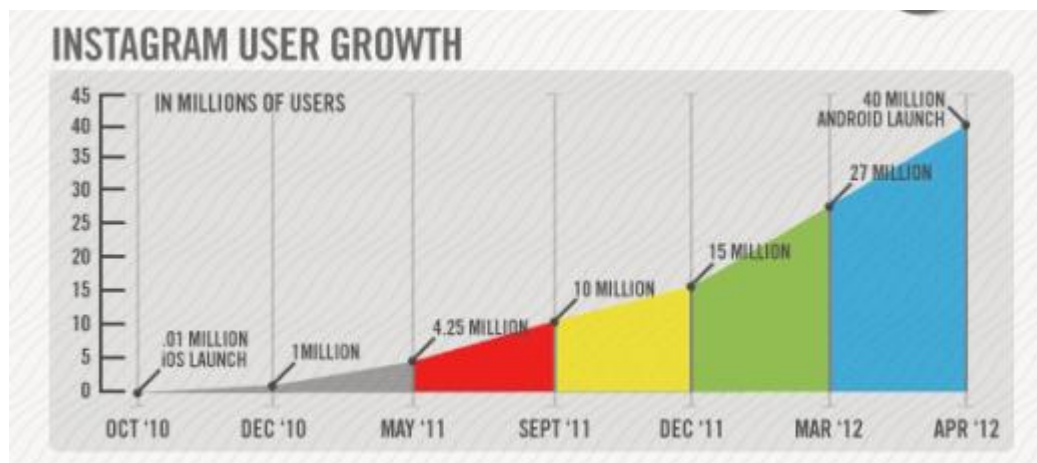


Figure 1 Instagram User Grow (<http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/infographic-instagram-stats/>  
 Accessed: April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013)

Figure 2 shows the user growth of Instagram between the year of its launch in October 2010 and April 2012. One can observe a consistently increasing curve. Not even a year later, the Instagram team announced the reach of the 100 million mark (System, 2013). The development of growth of the users' community looks even more intriguing when being compared to the growth of other leading social media sites. The below figure depicts the time span it would take the different social media website to generate 100 million users, (retrieved from digitalbuzzblog.com) naming four major social media platforms: LinkedIn, Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook.

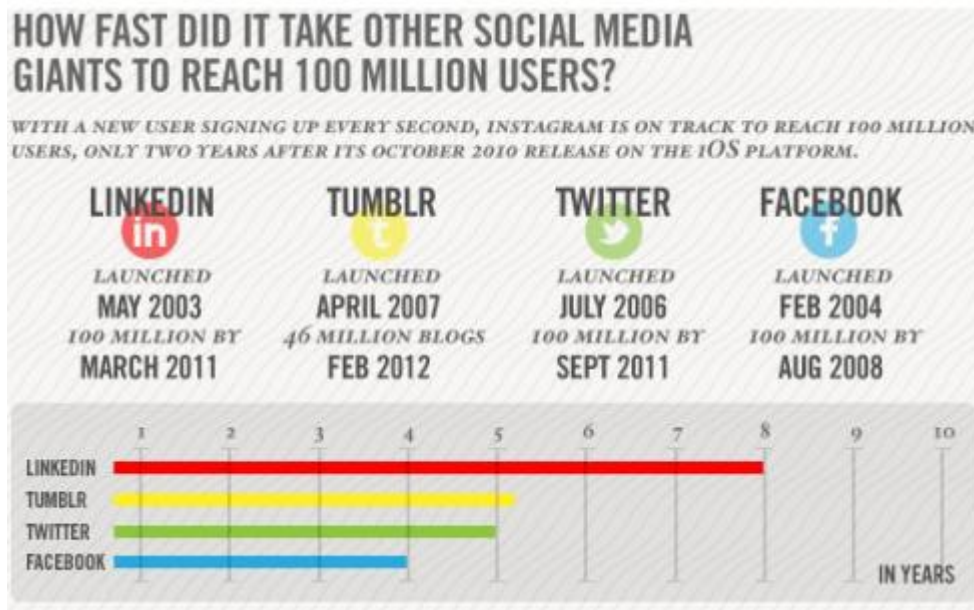


Figure 2 Timeframe for the 100 million User Mark (<http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/infographic-instagram-stats/> Accessed: April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013)

Looking at the number of years it took each business compared to the year it reached 100 million users one could suggest that it was a matter of time and how long it took the potential users to accept social media for private use. Concluding one can suggest that individuals needed a certain time to accept the use of social media and their accompanying disclosure of privacy. Hence, the younger the business the faster the growth of the followers occurred, however these businesses owe their fast accretion to the first social media sites, such as LinkedIn, which prepared the society for the new innovation of communication.

Instagram’s press centre released in 2013 interesting numbers concerning the usage of Instagram featuring 100 million monthly active users, 40 million photos being uploaded per day, with 8.500 likes and 1.000 comments per second (Instagram, 2013). This involves vast numbers concerning communication and one could suggest that they would even progressively increase over time.

### 2.4.3 Instagram and Facebook

Last year Kevin Systrom announced on [blog.instagram.com](http://blog.instagram.com) that Facebook will purchase Instagram: “Every day that passes, we see more experiences being shared through Instagram in ways that we never thought possible. It’s because of our dedicated and talented team that we’ve gotten this far, and with the support and

cross-pollination of ideas and talent at a place like Facebook, we hope to create an even more exciting future for Instagram and Facebook alike” (Systrom, 2012). Summing up Facebook and Instagram would not only form an entity but they will be dependent on each other in terms of building communities and total media scope.

Before Facebook gained control of Instagram the latter’s triumphal march was dependent on Twitter as stated on futurebiz.com. The published pictures could automatically be seen on the Twitter timeline and therefore provide “ReTweets” and “@Replies” (Firsching, 2013). Both profited from each other – Instagram provided for user activities and Twitter generated new users for Instagram (Firsching, 2013). Since the purchase of Instagram by Facebook the photos were no longer depicted on Twitter but they were merely presented as a link (Firsching, 2013).

On April 9<sup>th</sup> 2013 “Facebook has agreed to buy photo sharing network Instagram for \$1 billion in a combination of cash and stock [...]. It’s Facebook’s biggest acquisition ever, in both price and reach” (Segall, 2012). Comparing this to a similar deal some years ago where Yahoo acquired Flickr, for merely 35 million US Dollars (Segall, 2012), the price Facebook paid for Instagram seems outrageous. As Instagram is part of Facebook it now is the world’s biggest stock-photo agency (Der Standard, 2012).

#### **2.4.4 The One Billion Dollar Question**

With a price tag of one billion Dollars for a two year old start-up, Instagram is the so far largest acquisition by Marc Zuckerberg’s social media platform Facebook, which itself had at that time a market capitalization of an incredible US\$ 100 bn.

When Instagram tried to raise US\$ 500 m to finance its expansion plans at the beginning of 2012, the well-renowned US financial newspaper Wall Street Journal already wondered about a déjà vu of the “Dotcom Bubble” (Spencer, 2012).

Only two years after the creation of the company by its two founders (then still being called Burbn Inc.), the market value of Burbn Inc./Instagram had already multiplied by twenty in one single year, while it still employed a staff of only 13 and had built a users’ base of more than 30 million (Cyran, 2012; Spencer, 2012).

In essence, what was Facebook's vision in acquiring this company for a price equal to 1 % of its own market value at the time of the purchase?

On the grounds of what investors had experienced in the wake of the Dotcom Bubble with similar mobile internet platforms, the Wall Street Journal (2012) raised doubts on the ability of this new smart phone-based software to transform an astronomic acquisition price into future revenues (Spencer, 2012). Venture capital firms, knowledgeable of the software industry, had previously turned down much smaller investment requests of Burbn's management, sceptical of the Instagram business model and seeing a particular shortcoming in the fact that the software would not be able to run on laptops and PCs (Spencer, 2012). Another criticism referred to the fact that "Instagram doesn't lend itself easily to an e-commerce-strategy, such as offering daily deals" (Spencer, 2012).

Still, the analysts of the Wall Street Journal saw potential in Instagram and wrote: "Instagram isn't without commercial possibilities. It has a growing and involved user base, and the app is also catching on with companies. The Ann Taylor clothing chain, Urban Outfitters Inc. and fashion label Marc Jacobs, for instance, have created accounts and use Instagram to promote their brands." (Spencer, 2012). "Last year, Apple named Instagram the iPhone app of the year". (Spencer, 2012).

At the time of the acquisition, a US venture capitalist expressed his opinion on the deal that Facebook possessed at the time of the acquisition a considerable amount of cash while it disposed of an excellent professional Mergers & Acquisitions team seeking investment opportunities (Bloomberg, 2012). Ed Zimmerman (2012) referred to "people helping out their friends in investing" – in essence the typical networking function in seed funding situations as is usual in a fast-growing industry (Bloomberg, 2012). Bloomberg's interviewer also referred to the possibility of a "bubble brewing between Silicon Valley [i.e. California] and Silicon Alley" [referring to investors from the East Coast, i.e. Wall Street] (Bloomberg, 2012).

Reuters' columnist Robert Cyran (2012) expressed a hypothesis in an article published in April 2012: "Facebook's defensive purchase of Instagram raises a red flag. Online photos are supposed to be a core Facebook competence. Paying \$1 billion for the popular picture-sharing app may boost the social network in mobile.

But paying over the odds for revenue-free rivals is usually the hallmark of anxious, mature firms – not a growth company seeking to go public at a \$100 billion valuation” (Cyrn, 2012). The author of these lines clearly expresses his view that the acquisition was overpriced and defensive in nature, simply speaking that Facebook acquired the start-up for reasons of not letting its closest competitors Twitter and Yahoo into the promising market of the young generation communicating web-based pictures (Cyrn, 2012).

In summary, the acquisition of Instagram, reportedly negotiated in person by Facebook’s Marc Zuckerberg, was extensively discussed on US television, in the financial press, amongst Facebook’s investors and by bloggers. In retrospect it appears, it was not only done for the simple reason of achieving a decent return on the US \$ 1 bn investment, but for further-going strategic considerations, i.e. for reasons of availability of large cash amounts going along with an expansion policy of Facebook and coupled with the defensive strategy of not letting another competitor pick it up.

#### **2.4.5 The User Policy - Instagram uses its Power for Commercial Purposes**

“Dear Users: You are not our customers, you are the cattle we drive to market and auction off to the highest bidder. Enjoy your feed and keep producing the milk” (Braithwaite, 2012).

This crisp statement drawn from a blog encapsulates well the sentiments and reaction by the user community of Instagram concerning the newly announced Terms of Use of December 2012, effective as of January 19<sup>th</sup> 2013. The Terms of Use are drafted in favor of the provider and to the detriment of the users, as can be seen from the following statements drawn from the said Terms of Use.

At the heart of the Terms of Use, Instagram’s lawyers put the definition of the provider’s rights of access to photos uploaded by the software’s users: “Instagram does not claim ownership of any Content that you post on or through the Service. Instead, one hereby grants to Instagram a non-exclusive, fully paid and royalty-free, transferable, sub-licensable, worldwide license to use the content that you post on or through the Service. The latter subject to the Service's Privacy Policy, available here

<http://instagram.com/legal/privacy/>, including but not limited to sections 3 ("Sharing of Your Information"), 4 ("How We Store Your Information"), and 5 ("Your Choices About Your Information"). [...]” (Instagram, 2013). In summary, this rule can only be interpreted as an almost unlimited and “for free” transfer of ownership of the content to Instagram and its third party contractors.

“We use third-party analytics tools to help us measure traffic and usage trends for the Service. These tools collect information sent by your device or our Service, including the web pages you visit, add-ons, and other information that assists us in improving the Service. We collect and use this analytics information with analytics information from other Users so that it cannot reasonably be used to identify any particular individual User” (Instagram, 2013). Putting it into simple words, Instagram is permitted to utilize a wide range of analytical software to identify and measure user profiles and trends for its commercial benefit. However, restrictively interpreting this statement should not allow the provider to draw conclusions as to the identity of an individual user.

The provider is permitted to download cookies and to generate almost any kind of information on the users (Instagram, 2013).

In addition the provider reserves the virtually unlimited right to make use the platform for its own advertising activities as well as that of third party commercial enterprises (Instagram, 2013). Notably, there are limited restrictions in the terms regarding the utilization of the information generated by Instagram.

Referring back to the observation made in the previous chapter 2.4.4 “The One Billion Dollar Question” the Terms of Use deal with the hypothetical matter of selling parts of the database collected on the Instagram users: “If we sell or otherwise transfer part or the whole of Instagram or our assets to another organization (e.g., in the course of a transaction like a merger, acquisition, bankruptcy, dissolution, liquidation), your information such as name and email address, User Content and any other information collected through the Service may be among the items sold or transferred. You will continue to own your User Content. The buyer or transferee will have to honor the commitments we have made in this Privacy Policy” (Instagram, 2013). Without making a direct reference to the individual user the transfer of the



user generated content and profiles are commercial and economic drivers, hence the assets related to are clearly the virtual “cattle” referred to in the opening quote.

#### **2.4.5.1      *The Consequences***

General Business Terms are part of the individual’s actual and virtual lives. These conditions frequently pop up when entering an internet community however, rarely if ever are they read and many users accept them blindly excluding the idea that anything negative could happen. According to Pascal Paukner (2012) from Süddeutsche.de Instagram speculated in this user behavior as they did not aim to formulate the User Policies comprehensively (Paukner, 2012). Thousands of users felt bypassed, “pranked” and deceived; a chorus of outrage arose (Paukner, 2012). Further some users concerned that “Facebook would swallow up their beloved community” (NY DailyNews, 2012). According to Lani Rosales (2012) the alterations of Instagram’s User Policies would not only influence the user behavior but on the community itself, motivating users to delete their accounts (Rosales, 2012). Hence, Instagram reacted shortly after the online rebellion of its users denying their purpose of selling the user content and claiming that they will change the User Policies in favor for the users (Paukner, 2012). According to Handelsblatt.com the user policies were merely rephrased on the behalf of the Public Relations reputation (Handelsblatt, 2012). The staff of AGBeat forecasted in December 2012 that some users will reallocate themselves to substitutes such as Flickr, Path, Twitters photo community and many more (AGBeat, 2012). In the following chapter a few alternatives that could also be of interest to tourism enterprises will be introduced. However, this also questions if it is simply all about Instagram, its vintage-looking filters, or in fact about the community itself.

#### **2.4.6      *Alternatives***

This chapter will give a short overview of photo-apps that could be a substitute to Instagram and could be of interest to tourism businesses; hence the three alternatives introduced are compatible with both, iPhone and Android.

##### **2.4.6.1      *Flickr***

Flickr provides very similar features to Instagram while it offers the possibility to combine it with its own community or other social networks such as Twitter,



Facebook or any other channel with all rights reserved to the user (Henry, 2012). Further Flickr is a well-known social media platform also by tourism enterprises.

#### **2.4.6.2 Twitter**

Since Instagram no longer provides the opportunity to upload pictures on Twitter but is merely a link, Twitter found a new partner named “Aviary”, a photo editor software that can be customized and doesn’t aim for a monopoly - so any webpage or mobile app could thus become its partner platform (Avi, 2012). Twitter took this opportunity to provide their user community further with the joy of “tweeting” pictures.

This app has the potential of becoming a useful tool for tourism marketing, as consumers have already or are going to engage in “tweeting”, Today, Twitter is one of the widest-spread social network platforms.

#### **2.4.6.3 EyeEm**

Martin Weigert (2013) and Jakob Steinschaden (2013) stated in January of this year that EyeEm is not only a formidable adversary but was rated as one of the most popular apps downloaded from Apples US-App-Store even ahead of Instagram (Weigert, 2013; Steinschaden, 2013). Similar to most photo-apps EyeEm offers features in the fashion of Instagram, but additionally provides four peculiarities that Instagram does not. EyeEm offers a “Discover Feed” that records the users’ interests and composes a suitable feed. In addition these topics of interest can be shared among people who feature a similar behavior and not only among friends (Meredith, 2012). Another characteristic of EyeEm is the “Around Me” that filters photos that were taken in the area the person is located (via GPS) that he or she can have a look at (Meredith, 2012). Last but not least the pictures taken and edited with EyeEm are not confined to Instagram’s square format, hence panoramic pictures are possible too (Meredith, 2012). The four additional features explained above can be of advantage for businesses too, especially in the tourism industry, as first of all the user scope is wider and secondly surroundings can be depicted more easily.

#### **2.4.7 A Question of Art**

In the age of Instagram and smart phones, it seems anyone can be an artist. “Add a filter to your cluttered concert photo and the image suddenly transforms into a

nostalgic, moody scene straight out of Rolling Stone” (Strickland, 2012); additionally Ashley Strickland (2012) states on edition.cnn.com that the phenomenon of filtered photography in social media is an echo of what has been done in advertising and art photography (Strickland, 2012).

#### **2.4.8 The Phenomenon of “Rich Kids of Instagram”**

Social media offers a vast range of information and whereabouts of individuals, groups and enterprises just to name a few; Instagram illustrates a further portal. Johannes Steger states on handelsblatt.com that the Instagram app has become the ideal self-staging tool for rich and young heirs posting Instagram photos of their Fiji trip for instance (Steger, 2012). “[...],there are some astonishing and incredibly decadent scenes on display [...], including some hotties riding near-topless on an elephant in the jungle[...] sliding down an amazing water slide attached to a multi-story mega-yacht “ (Dvorak, 2012). Further images can be found such as posted photos of a 100.000 EURO bill from St. Tropez or a young man climbing off a yacht in the Hamptons as Robert Frank from CNBC describes (Frank, 2012). Even though the destination or the trip itself does not seem illustrated as explicitly important to the “Rich Kids of Instagram” but rather the consumption of brands, expensive goods and prestigious products, one can observe that a majority of pictures was taken during holidays or trips. As mentioned in the chapter 2.1.2 “Photography in Tourism” Raab (2007) stated that the importance lies in experiencing oneself rather than the unknown (Raab, 2007).

### **3 Methodology**

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the potential of social media photography for the tourism industry with setting the focus on Instagram. The latter has now become part of Facebook which itself is broadly used as a communication platform by destination management organizations and related businesses.

#### **3.1 Research approach**

In order to achieve study-relevant results from a research exercise in a limited time, it is important to identify up-front the best suited research method for a specific

topic. In essence, three basic types of methods could be applied, namely quantitative, qualitative or a combination of the two (Creswell, 2003).

At the heart of the thesis lies the question of Instagram's potential as a marketing tool for tourism destination management, defined as a qualitative issue. Hence, this requires qualitative answers and opinions of persons in the marketing industry, destination management and of individuals working in related fields. For this reason, the most appropriate process is an interview.

From a high-level perspective, the tourism sector at large presents itself as a complex and correlated system with subordinated segments, such as advertising, legal matters and sociological trends, just to name a few. A plethora of influencing socio-economic factors appears interlinked with the general environment and trends in the tourism industry. Effective marketing and branding strategies are dependent on many external factors, including the media.

In order to address also related questions, the research covered some of those fields asking open-ended questions to individuals from the tourism and related sectors. Different segments leave space for interpretations of the answers. It is also important to keep in mind that Instagram is a young phenomenon to which users had so far only a limited exposure and can therefore only refer to a restricted experience.

## **3.2 Interviews**

The interviews were conducted through different communication channels; four interviews took place during personal meetings of approximately one hour each. The questions were prepared beforehand and sent via e-mail to the interviewees in order to provide them with the opportunity to prepare themselves. In paraphrased format the responses were summarized in writing and subsequently the approval by each of the interlocutors was sought and the results were discussed. Two Interviews were conducted by way of Facebook's chat function and two by e-mail. At specific request of one interviewee, the questionnaire was e-mailed beforehand followed by a telephone call, allowing him to reconsider his response and to sharpen his answers once more.

The questionnaire comprised twelve open-ended questions. In the course of the process, the questions were modified slightly reflecting profession and background of the interviewee and adjusted according to the responses received in the previous interviews from other partners. The queries were grouped by three topics: (i) asking for personal experiences with and general knowledge on Instagram, including the user's perception of the product and the individuals' connection to it, if any. (ii) How could an Instagram business concept look like and how could it be implemented. (iii) A final question left space for interpretations by the interviewees, giving them the opportunity to formulate an opinion of their own and how they would view Instagram's future usage.

The sequence of questions tried to apply bottom-up logic. In order to introduce the topic, the questionnaire posed first a general question on existing personal exposure to Instagram. In addition, it should gain an insight on the Instagram's image with each interviewee, as there are so far no notable studies existing, followed by a more pointed query on its usability for business purposes.

The initial question was designed to introduce the topic to the interviewee and collected his or her first thoughts when being confronted with the topic, followed by more individual questions, asking if and in what context the interlocutor had so far been exposed to the use of the software. The next set of questions addressed the potential usability of the software program for business purposes, i.e. consumer-to-consumer-, consumer-to-business- and business-to-consumer scenarios. When considering its user-generated content and the possibilities offered particularly by its various filter functions, this led to a discussion on whether Instagram could be perceived by tourism businesses or the industry at large as an opportunity or rather as a threat.

The questionnaire and the answers from each respondent can be found in the appendix.

### **3.2.1 Interview Partners**

As already mentioned above several interview partners from different fields were chosen namely working in tourism organizations, graphic design and marketing as well as common travelers who use Instagram actively.

### **3.2.1.1 Destination Management Organizations**

To cover the segment of Destination Management Organizations representatives of the “Österreich Werbung” also known as “Austrian National Tourist Board” and the “Vienna Tourist Board” were asked to answer the questions.

The representative for the Austrian Tourist Board was Mag. (FH) Daniel Steiner who is responsible for the agency’s digital media strategy (Strategie Digitale Medien). The “Austrian National Tourist Board” is one of the biggest Destination Management Organizations Worldwide with offices based in more than 30 Countries. Existing since 1955 the organization brands its mission “Urlaub in Österreich” positioning Austria as an inspiring country that offers ongoing recreation and recuperation. The Brand is built upon three pillars, which shall shape an inspiring unity through interaction. In order to offer Austria as a product the Austrian Tourism Board had to determine its target group. The latter is defined as “Established – Postmaterialists”. Besides the website <http://www.austriatourism.com/> the Austrian Tourist office has established its own Facebook and Twitter site that help to promote different campaigns and function as a channel for direct communication with users and potential travelers.

The Interview Partner provided from the “Vienna Tourist Board” was Ronja Spranger (B. A. ) who is working in the Department of Social Media with the focus on Business to Consumer and internet marketing.

The “Vienna Tourist Board” is the official destination-marketing agency for the tourism sector of the City of Vienna. It provides many service offers, advice and thorough information for Viennese tourist businesses.

The “Vienna Tourist Board” exists since 1955 and functions similar to the “Austrian National Tourist Board”. It markets the Austria’s capital as its official marketing agency. It focuses on different duties and markets, collecting relevant information and data relating to those markets. It assists in promotion and public relations also in Business to Consumer markets and provides marketing plans. Additionally, the “Vienna Tourist Board” implements different media tasks and is well established in Facebook and Twitter.

### **3.2.1.2 Tourism Agency**

The Interview partner provided for this segment was Philipp Stol, Director of Sales from “Agil Touristic & Services”, an agency that concentrates on incoming tourism and functions as an intermediary, organizing trips, events and accommodations, just to name a few, for group tours and individuals. Agil Touristic & Services prepares bespoke packages according to the needs and requirements of individual travelers. As this thesis deals with a possible utilization of Instagram by the tourism industry, also a contribution of staff involved in “incoming” it is relevant to the topic.

### **3.2.1.3 Design Hotel**

Another important element in the tourism industry is represented by the “modern lifestyle segment” of the 21th century. One interview with a Junior Sales and Marketing Manager of a design hotel captures this attitude well, focusing in his answers on aspects of modern lifestyle, latest technologies, and vintage. The target groups of these types of hotels are usually young dynamic individuals who enjoy innovation, creativity and love to experience variety, irrespective of their gender, or cultural background. Since this hotel chain focuses on the characteristics of customers’, Instagram could be of interest, as it contains an innovative technological channel that allows display a certain lifestyle through nostalgic filters.

### **3.2.1.4 Tourism related Segments**

Other interviewees came from a different background with two students of tourism and hospitality management, corresponding to the natural target group of Instagram. In addition, one graphic designer and a marketing expert were included in the thesis’ sampler, as they are representative for creative and visual marketing. One other interlocutor with particular insight and understanding of trends in social media was interviewed as a representative of the community of active Instagram users.

## **4 Findings**

### **4.1 Analysis of the Interview Answers**

This chapter summarizes and analyses the results of nine interviews (conducted with 10 partners), broken down by three groups of questions dealing with (i) the personal

exposure of the interviewed individuals to Instagram in the past, (ii) the possibilities for a professional application of the software, and (iii) a possible future usage:

Asked as to their personal experience, the interviewees associated Instagram with being a trendy, hip, but possibly short-lived phenomenon, somewhat linked to the lifestyle of hipsters. Two respondents qualified the software as a fun gadget that offers its users possibilities to share experiences and important moments with their friends instantaneously.

Though only being integrated into the platform of Facebook for slightly over a year, it was already mentioned in combination with Facebook and Twitter as an adequate channel to express users' personalized visual perception of reality. Its true value in terms of its artistic function and abilities appears questionable, albeit one interviewee found a certain resemblance of the processed pictures with CD-albums or covers, he further associated in a way with a certain "rocker image". Another interesting observation by an interviewee indicated that Instagram is a particular useful tool for self-realization due to its instant connection to social media platforms. Furthermore, Instagram seems exciting because of its peculiar square format of its pictures.

By and large, all respondents associated Instagram with the young generation, aged between thirteen and the mid-twenties.

Even though all respondents were familiar with Facebook, either through private use or for business purposes, only four of them in fact actively made use of the software. Three interviewees use Instagram customarily for the purpose of sharing important moments in their lives with their friends in a quick and easy manner and without having to provide further explanations in writing – along the expression "a picture is worth a thousand words". Only one of the respondents, working for the Vienna Tourist Board, uses Instagram also for professional purposes.

The second group of questions aimed at capturing the users' perception of whether Instagram's technical features and possibilities would allow its users to advance with their picture taking into creating art. With no straightforward answer being provided, two of the respondents mentioned the almost limitless possibilities of using various filters and therefore allowing the appearance of the picture to be

modified or alienated. One respondent, however, saw a certain threat. The photos could also lose their individual appeal, as pictures could easily look indifferent.

Four respondents were inclined to deny the question. One respondent qualified the concept as innovative, while its features do not contribute to the users' creativity. One interviewee contradicted in a way to this answer by stating that the possibilities of alienation offered by way of the Instagram filters and the quality of the end product were mediocre, restricted by the technical capabilities of the portable phones used as cameras and by the photographers' own skills, i.e. real retro photography should be exercised with the use of a genuine retro-camera. Two interviewees fully denied the capabilities of Instagram to deliver products of art, maybe with a minor concession: They see this question of applied art in photography as being dependent on "what" is depicted and not on the fact of which filters are being used. Under given circumstances, as one respondent said, it could be perceived as products with certain, tough limited, character of social-action-art, but definitely not as artwork in the narrow sense of the word. Two respondents countered the query by the question: "What is art? - Anything can be art!"

All respondents were of the opinion that the use of Instagram itself is to be seen as a trend or a transitory phase, however, that the idea of sharing photos naturally existed long before Instagram, hence Instagram might phase out eventually. The activity of communication by means of sharing ones lives in a photographic manner however, will clearly persist.

Further, the respondents associated Instagrams potential for strengthening individuals' communication skills with the above quoted saying of "a picture being worth a thousand words". Instagram and its applications give its users the possibility to broadcast moments and surroundings in the way they perceive them in these very moments. The idea of picture sharing is the contemporary way of communication in times of globalization and misunderstandings through the written word could thus be minimized.

The following paragraph deals with Instagrams possibilities of application in terms of business. Whereas all respondents except one can see ample potential by expanding



the current communication channel from the C2C usage to C2B and further more as a communication channel for B2C.

One interviewee concentrated in his answer on the C2C communication channel while combining his thoughts on C2B with B2C into one. A business can lose control of the information process, fall victim to individual opinions that are indiscriminately communicated through the channels of a social platform such as Facebook or Twitter being linked to photo software such as Instagram. C2B and B2C could merge to an entity. A business could implement a marketing strategy by encouraging consumers to show their “Coca-Cola moment”. Consumers have the chance to present how and when they consume this specific product or service in a certain moment. This strategy could enhance the push-effects in marketing. Further people actively display moments and situations using that specific product and encourage others to do the same. The B2C concept inviting customers to show their product moment suggests a new method of creative market research. In addition Instagram is a useful tool to demonstrate an innovative channel of relationship building with customers, as Web 2.0 multiplies in importance. One interviewee stated that the C2B process would clearly need an element of quality control before a business could make use of user-generated content.

One respondent recommended a further B2C-strategy. The latter can make use of Instagram as a non-verbal marketing tool that allows communication between businesses and consumers of different cultural backgrounds more efficiently. In addition, a business can obtain a broader attention by using so-called “hashtags”.

Working for an incoming tourism agency and referring to his business, one respondent did only see limited potential in Instagram for “B2B” purposes, albeit, he could imagine Instagram being used in rating platforms to enhance or visualize a review. This approach however, contradicts the statement of another interviewee who believed that Instagram could turn out almost as a threat for tourism enterprises and destination managers, if used as a rating tool. People could run the risk of evaluating the quality of the picture rather than the destination itself or the touristic experience. This is in a way the reverse side of the coin of the quoted saying “a picture is worth a thousand words”.

One respondent was already familiar with the application of Instagram as a marketing tool from the “B2C” perspective. He referred to some television channels presenting “behind-the-scene” pictures, to arouse interest. He also could imagine similar applications for hotels or for the airline industry by giving the customer a feeling of direct involvement.

One interviewee recalled an example of the well-known the NH Hotel Group, inviting their customers to up-load pictures after having woken up in the hotel bed (“Wake-up Pics Contest”). Another interviewee referred to this type of marketing strategy as “show-us-your-Coca-Cola-moment”, as stated above.

The interlocutors can see a clear value added in the use of Instagram for marketing and advertising campaigns. This, however, is limited to a young target group that is familiar with Twitter and Facebook. One respondent brought in the idea of the concept of AIDA (“Attention>Interest>Desire>Action”), stating that Instagram could create attention and interest, in rare cases possibly desire, however, Instagram is probably not powerful enough as a tool to evoke an action of immediate buying by a potential customer.

Concerning the image of a holiday destination created by way of Instagrams filter functions, only one respondent was of the belief that good pictures do in fact have the potential to modify the image of a destination. The other respondents believe it being substantially more dependent on the efficiency of a destination management organization and its marketing strategy. Summarizing the comments made in response to this set of questions, Instagram may probably turn out as a useful assisting tool for certain strategies in tourism marketing, however, is at this point of the process not perceived as a leading tool for destination management, not to speak of a main channel of communication for B2C purposes.

A final question referred to the future of Instagram. Whereas respondents believe that it still has the potential to grow and expand its reach to new customers through being now integrated into Facebook. Some others believe Instagram to be only a temporary fad which will tail-off eventually, possibly already with the vanishing of the current “retro-hype”.

One respondent could imagine of Instagram being applied to a trial run of one of the 25h Hotels, as its design is 60's-inspired and Instagrams filters could present the hotel and its interior from a "retro" perspective.

Only one business that took part in the survey actually uses Instagram. The Vienna Tourist Board sees potential in Instagram and applies it to approach and involve fans of Vienna. Albeit Instagram is not officially included in the social media portfolio of the Vienna Tourist Board, it is currently in the process of testing its potential for value adding. The Tourist Board does not use own official photo material, as it would not represent Instagrams essence in a proper manner, of snapshots and "in-the-moment experiences" of users.

Own pictures are taken for the Vienna Tourist Board Platforms Instagram. In addition, fans of Vienna can tag the Vienna Tourist Board in their pictures, thus share their view of the city.

One respondent sees potential in this marketing strategy involving tourists actively. With hardly any tourist ever seeing e.g. the Saint Stephen Cathedral of Vienna as portrayed in a travel guide, Instagram has the potential of displaying the City or for that purpose, any destination from a perceived personal angle to which other tourists can then relate, it just covers the reality through the eyes of the everyday city tourist. – Summarizing, it has the possibility to interpret reality.

For one interlocutor today's tourism promotion performs too much along the lines of a traditional "pulling" while Instagram could turn into a useful tool for advertising and marketing by bringing more forcefully into play new and innovative touristic "push-factors".

At large, all interviewees did see potential in Instagram to become an innovative and even an important new tool assisting the traditional marketing in the tourism industry. It would require further in-depth research once a widening group of consumers uses the software during the coming years.



Figure 3 Instagram's User Synopsis

## 4.2 Analysis

Before embarking on the comparison of the findings and the literature review in regards to the usability of Instagram for the tourism industry, it makes sense to take a closer look at the results concerning tourist's photography and social media behavior, as Instagram is driven by user-generated content, hence highly dependent on the individual.

The photographic behavior of individuals during holidays accretes (Bourdieu, 1983) one could however expect a slight change in the frequency of photography and the circumstances of events since the advent of smart phones. Due to the merge of the internet access and built-in cameras in smart phones individuals have the possibility to take pictures and upload those on social media platforms instantaneously (Irrgang & Piantoni, 2011). According to an interviewee the technology of mobile phones will improve even more, hence photography with cell phones will increase and persist over time independently of Instagram's lifetime.

Tourists take pictures for several reasons; one motive is to memorize experiences (Starl, 1995) most respondents agree to this hypothesis adding that Instagram

enables Individuals to share their perceived moments immediately. In addition, one interviewee added that Instagram is a tool of proof. Gisèle Freud (1976) referred to the same idea in regards to analogue photography (Freund, 1976). Susan Sontag (2001) expressed that taking pictures is nearly as evident as experiencing a moment and continuing, viewing pictures implies taking part in a public event. A respondent took this thought a level higher mentioning that a moment is only cherished once it is released on Facebook publically. Another interviewee however, states that Instagram is a channel to communicate one's own angle of perception and less the idea of "done that, been there".

Another motive for the tourists' photography is to activate ones artistic and creative abilities (Bourdieu, 1983). This hypothesis leads to the question if Instagram could be seen as art. The respondents had different opinions on that issue, the majority however believes that Instagram can be a channel to express one's own view of the moment, as the filters can enhance emotions, but does not imply to be an artistic achievement. An article on modern photography and Instagram questions its artistic value and states that Instagram and its filters mirror the ongoing exposure to processed photography in advertisement (Strickland, 2012). Eva Maria Raab came up with a similar hypothesis declaring that billboards and magazines influence the photographic behavior greatly (Raab, 2007). One interlocutor finds resemblances of Instagram with CD covers and similar.

The same interviewee also stated that Instagram is a portal for self-realization, which could accomplish Eva Maria Raabs (2007) hypothesis that holidays serve as a medium to experience one's self (Raab, 2007) this mannerism can also be observed among the rich kids of Instagram as mentioned in the chapter 2.4.8.

Social media platforms give tourists the chance to share pictures, Lo et al. (2011) detected, however, that most tourists take pictures but only few share them online. In regards to Instagram, however, most respondents did not share that opinion. Concerning the above-mentioned hypothesis, one should take the date of Instagrams founding in 2011 into consideration.

The following passages will deal with Instagram as a business related tool with the focus on destination management and tourism organizations.

Social media provide businesses to communicate a brand identity and give consumers a channel to interact and share this identity impartial from location and geographical boundaries (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This concept is also valid for destination branding and tourism marketing. One respondent sees a great advantage in Instagram as it is worldwide accessible and communicates experiences on a visual basis, hence could increase misunderstandings and limitations through language boundaries, to which Hsu (2012) referred to. Additionally one interviewee could imagine Instagram exploring further monetization and brand implementation possibilities. This assumption is reinforced by Instagram's user policies, where it reads that all information that is uploaded will be broken down and arbitrated for commercial activities (Instagram, 2013).

O'Connor et al. (2008) believe that the involvement of destinations through social media with the tourists have an impact on the destinations consumption (O'Connor et al., 2008). Albeit Pöyry et al. (2013) referring to Facebook, differentiate between liking and buying behavior, hence the liking a destination's Facebook page of a potential tourist does not imply an acquisition (Pöyry, et al., 2013). One respondent believes in Instagram's ability to provoke interest and desire but represented individually, it would not evoke buying behavior.

Twitter, a micro blogging platform that allows real-time updates is also used by businesses and tourism destinations. Twitter can augment brand images and reputation (Fischer & Reuber, 2011) and gives individuals the idea of "follow and to-be-followed" (Oussalah, et al., 2013) which can be ideally used by destination management organizations. Instagram can offer a similar function on a visual basis, when applied with "hashtags".

Except for one, all respondents were unanimously of the opinion that Instagram can be used for advertising purposes, as Instagram provides a visual, but non-committal communication channel, where tourists act as consumers and producers in terms of marketing and information processes (Månsson, 2011).

## 5 Conclusion

At large the aim of this thesis was to identify Instagram's usability potential for destination management organizations and the tourism industry. The topics of the literature review gave a broad overview on behavioral aspects in tourism photography and the use of social media by tourists and as a marketing concept for tourism destinations. The findings are based on interviews conducted with individuals active in the tourism industry or in related fields.

As Instagram is a social media platform that businesses and individuals use, it is based on user-generated content; hence, one cannot draw a clear line between C2C, B2C, and C2B marketing activities.

Currently, Instagram is predominantly used as a C2C communication channel. This however, could change in the near future resulting in an increased C2B and B2C traffic.

Some businesses use Instagram to interact visually with consumers, either by providing a platform where tourists can express common interests or even try to invoke tourists to share their special moment with others, in terms of "show us your Coca-Cola experience". This interaction imports both a business-to-consumer and vice versa, a consumer-to-business conveyance that further has the ability to arouse interest of other consumers, hence this communication process is a consumer-to-consumer interaction.

Instagram has potential to be used as a marketing tool for destination management organizations and tourism related businesses. As the latter provide intangible products and therefore are dependent on visual communication channels additionally to other. Instagram entails different filter functions that provide pictures with a certain emotional flavor, can therefore enhance the felt, and shared experience. Additionally, Instagram is a mobile application that enables immediate filter processes and picture sharing on social media platforms instantaneously.

Tourism and photography have always accompanied each other and pictures have always helped to reinforce information in a catchy manner. Instagram can therefore be seen as an optimal merge of instantaneous photo sharing during holidays and

visual communication that additionally fits the current vintage and retro trend due to its filters.

Tourists and potential consumers demand transparency of information (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013), entertainment and interaction with the brand and its business, hence Instagram can enhance the affiliation and experience as “a picture is worth a thousand words”.

Summing up, Instagram has an application potential for destination management organizations and tourism related business in the business to consumer sector, when applied correctly and only used additionally to other social media channels, if businesses want to engage in and enhance business to consumer relationships.

Instagram is a communication channel based on social media that responds fully to the contemporary needs and requirements, technological and social trends and their fast moving innovative developments. Hence, Instagram is in all likelihood limited in time, The saying on the Secession in Vienna “Der Zeit ihre Kunst. Der Kunst ihre Freiheit” (“To the age its art. To art its freedom” (Eloise, 2008)) by Ludwig Hevesi (Karlsplatz.org, n.d.). Photography during tourism activities also via mobile phones and the sharing of the pictures taken with friends and family however, will most likely survive all trends, albeit the channels of information exchange will develop further. Competing software applications already exist and time will prove whether Instagram can also in future maintain its dominating role vis-à-vis its competitors.

One can observe that Instagram became an important pacemaker in the use of day-to-day including tourism photography in its short lifespan of its existence. If the trend continues positively, the software is on its way to develop into a tool of marketing tourism products, particularly targeting the younger generation.

### **5.1 Limitations and further Research**

To date, social media and their relation to tourism already underwent considerable research. Instagram remains a new phenomenon, hence relevant field studies are scarce. This thesis tried to cover some grounds on the software’s usability in tourism matters by asking individuals working actively in the sector or in related businesses.



A broad-based and quantitative research should follow en suite. It should particularly include the views of tourists as representatives of the consumers, in order to obtain a more global and user-focused view. Research work should cover a longer-term observation period, also comparing Instagram in-depth with other competing social media and photo sharing platforms. As the social media scene is developing with enormous speed, it would provide ample material for academic and practical research.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Interview 1

**Received: March 27<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Mag. (FH) Daniel Steiner**

**Age: not given**

**Nationality: Austria**

**Austrian National Tourist Office**

**Contact data: [daniel.steiner@austria.info](mailto:daniel.steiner@austria.info)**

**1. Do you use Instagram?**

No, by now the Austrian National Tourism Office is not using Instagram as a marketing channel.

**2. If yes, in which context, when and why?**

See above.

**3. Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art?**

Yes. Although the cameras of the mobile devices are by far not as good as a DSLR, because of the almost unlimited possibilities of using filters and masking etc., the photos can get very good and creative.

**4. Do you think it is a trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

To my mind, photography with mobile devices will persist being an important part of the mobile industry since the technology is getting better and better. The question is if Instagram will still be part of this in the future or will all the features be available on Facebook or will there be another player.

**5. Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication? Why, why not?**

Like the saying “A picture is worth a thousand words” photos are communication or in this case Instagram provides the channel for this communication. Photos or paintings were always used to communicate with others or save information (e.g. paintings).

**6. Could it change from C2C to B2C or even to C2B interchange?**

I’m sure it could but there have to be detailed processes. In the c2c communication no control processes are necessary but when talking about C2B communication for the received pictures there has to be a kind of quality control mechanism before publishing those pictures.

**7. Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

The easiest way is to ask people to send you their pictures or your destination, a kind of photo competition. I remember a Instagram competition from NH Hotels where they asked their guest to post their wake up pictures (“Wake Up Pics Contest”).

But I’m sure there are other ways to use Instagram in business and that’s my question to you.

**8. Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the image of a destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why, or why not?**

In times of social media, the importance of photos is rising again. Because of the almost unlimited storage capacities of digital cameras, users don’t spend as much time in taking photos as they did with analogue cameras before. But since you are sharing your photos with a lot of people you try hard again to get a good shot. Since cameras of a mobile phone do not offer as many features as a DSLR filter help to retouch the photos and get the best out of them and good photos always have the power to change the image of a destination.

**9. Thinking of the above stated question; could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations?**

Both. If people try to support your destination by posting positive photos it is an opportunity. If people want to harm your image they will post a negative photo, like a photo of a rainy day or rubbish in the woods etc.

**10. What do you think the future holds?**

No one knows. Because of factors like the complexness and the exponential times we are living in and also the black swan effect no one can predict what the future will be like. My assumption is that Instagram will be integrated into Facebook and the brand Instagram itself will disappear. I'm sure in the future there will be several other services using photos for social communication with amazing new features (e.g. the Google Glass).

## Appendix 2 Interview 2

**Conducted: April 12<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Ronja Spranger, BA, Internet Marketing**

**Age: Not Given**

**Nationality: Austrian**

**Vienna Tourist Board**

**Contact Data: [ronja.spranger@wien.info](mailto:ronja.spranger@wien.info)**

**1. Instagram first thoughts:**

Exciting, due to the square format.

Porto (city in Portugal ) uses it greatly.

Self-exposure portal for some people

young demographic

**2. Do you use it?**

**3. And if yes in which context?**

In private use not excessively, but sometimes during holidays and trips.

**4. Do you think it is art?**

Not really, it is rather a lifestyle instrument and hits the current desires of expressing oneself. The filters are given, so you can only be creative in the picture composition and choosing from a limited range of filters. I would say it CAN be art as – in my opinion – anything CAN be.

**5. Do you think it is a trend /phase or will it develop persistence?**

With Social Media you can never tell. Social Media as such has been in use for some years now and is not decreasing. The concept of photo sharing on Social Media platforms already developed some time ago; however the idea of a Social Media platform that is based only on photo sharing is relatively new. – I definitely think that

images are very important in the fast paced social media, and a picture can say more than a thousand words, as we all know :) So I see a lot of potential there and am looking forward to seeing new things there. ---> it is moving into the direction of more moving image, have a look at Twitter's VINE app - One will have to see..

**6. Do you think Instagram is a sort of communication?**

Yes.. People communicate images taken from their personal point of view - how they perceive their surrounding and visual angle. It is "their" personal perception that they want to share, not only the image as such. It's not so much a "been there done that" but more a "this is how my world looks like"

**7. Could it change from C2C to B2C or even C2B interchange? Could Instagram be used in business?**

We (Vienna Tourist Board) use it for certain campaigns as a new way for us to involve fans of Vienna. It is not (yet) part of our official social media portfolio but rather tested how we can make a valuable use of it. .

We do not use our official image material in Instagram since this is against the "in the moment" nature of the platform and also you cannot just put a vintage filter on a high gloss picture. I take pictures on my walks around the city to show off the beauty and specialties of Vienna to our fans. ---> NEW: Fans can tag us in their pictures of Vienna and add their own personal view of the city to our stream.

Pictures work differently on Facebook and Instagram. On Facebook you can go all out with high quality pictures and panoramas, on Instagram the interesting angle and details are more important. .

At the moment Instagram is more a C2C interaction but brands are quickly catching up and using it to their advantage

Twitter as Social Media "gets younger" other Social Media networks older..

In C2B Facebook and Flickr are more in use at the moment. However we (Vienna Tourist Board) assemble pictures taken by fans/guests and post picture albums with the most beautiful pictures from time to time. – Reflecting their experience and esteem.

There is an awareness in our company concerning the importance of user generated content. Of course we take our own pictures of Vienna, but travelling is an individual



experience for everyone, that's what makes it so exciting. We love to see our fans' view of Vienna and are very grateful for our active and very talented fan community. We do not use Pinterest at the moment but keep an eye out for it. We love the idea of it but as a brand we are very aware of the copyright problematic. Never say never, but if we decide to establish a Pinterest presence it will have to be well planned.

**8. Could Advertising and Destination Management Organisations make use of Instagram?**

It depends on the business! DMO could use it more easily.

We do. At the moment in the field of campaigns. – “Behind the scenes” and “making of”

- The people have the chance to follow the development of a campaign or contribute their own pictures.

**9. Do you think Instagram is an opportunity or threat for DMOs etc?**

I think it is an opportunity since our “product” is a city, a region or a country and a DMO's job is to show potential guests the beauty of our place so they visit here as tourists. A potential threat could be that people post unflattering pictures, but in my opinion you should not do social media at all if you are afraid of your community's contributions. You see polished pictures of travel destinations everywhere, Instagram and social media in general provides a more “real” and personal view, as mentioned before. It is like sharing your travel pictures with your friends but rather than in your living room on a beamer on the internet for the whole world to see and appreciate. For a brand Instagram offers a way to show your destination from different angles.

**10. Do you think Instagram can change the perception of a surrounding? Or even change an image of a destination?**

People have a filter-awareness (awareness of the use of filters). The pictures are basically made more emotional through the addition of a vintage look. (But people are less critical on Instagram than on Facebook).

**11. Do you use it in different concepts than private use?**

Yes for our business.

**12. What do you think the future holds for Instagram?**

I think Instagram is currently exploring monetization possibilities and more ways for brands to be on Instagram. The addition of the web profiles was a step in that direction, as they still offer a lot of white space for potential advertising. It is also likely that Instagram will see a deeper integration into Facebook in the future. For example picture shares from Instagram could be featured more prominently inside the revamped news stream, when you can filter for pictures.

In general a quite wide range – can be used by and for everyone.

### **Appendix 3 Interview 3**

**Received: April 14<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Moritz Böhlke, BA, Junior Sales & Marketing Manager**

**Age: 26**

**Nationality: German**

**Design Hotel – Hamburg**

**Contact Data: [moritz@boehlke.org](mailto:moritz@boehlke.org)**

#### **Instagram: First thoughts:**

Fun gadget. Easy way to share one picture on many social media sites at once and show your friends what you are doing at the moment.

#### **2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?**

Yes, frequently!

#### **3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

Always when there is something nice or funny I want to share with my friends. Like the saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words." It is quick and easy to take a picture and post it, rather than writing a long status. The visual appeal is increased through Instagram; The vintage-style filters make a rather boring picture worth looking at.

#### **4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

No! The filters in Instagram are very generic and variation is low. Especially in photography the quality of the picture is rather important and from a technical view, on both the camera/lens and the photographer, the quality is often very low. For me real retro-photo-art is taken with real retro-cameras and real contemporary photo art is taken with contemporary cameras.

**5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

I personally think it is a trend. As there is a vintage/retro movement in fashion and interior design at the moment it was obvious that Instagram would be that successful. At some point the vintage/retro phase will be over and Instagram will not be that famous anymore.

**6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication? (Why, Why not?)**

Yes of course. As mentioned before, "A picture is worth a thousand words". Especially in times of globalization it is easier to communicate through pictures than through words. Words, even if both the sender and the receiver speak the same language, can be misunderstood. Pictures - as long as they are not offensive to one side - always show the same thing, the risk of being misunderstood is minimized.

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C to B2C or even to C2B interchange?**

B2C definitely! Especially through the hash tags businesses will be able to get the attention of many potential customers. Once the attention is established and the potential customers are following the company on Instagram it can be a powerful multicultural marketing tool - Pictures do not need to be translated and can be understood by people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is a quick and easy way to transport bits and pieces of information and more importantly an emotion.

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

As mentioned before it can be used as an international marketing tool to get attention from customers, however I doubt that it will ever go further than entertainment. A picture is worth a thousand words, yes, but it can only transport a limited amount of information, the more complex and detailed the information is the less suitable a picture is. AS mentioned before it is a quick and easy way to transport an emotion and therefore it can be used for marketing. However, considering the AIDA-principle (Awareness-Interest-Desire-Action) I personally find that Instagram is

just applying to the A and the I - maybe to the D - however in many cases it needs more than a picture to get people to actually take action and buy your product.

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or why not?**

The only perception change I can imagine is that people think that the marketing department is quite hip and knows how to work the social media sites. However I doubt that it can change the image of a destination permanently. As I mentioned before, the images posted on Instagram can only increase the awareness and the interest in a product/destination, however there are many more factors actually influencing the desire and especially the action.

**10) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

It can be both. An opportunity definitely to (re-)raise awareness and interest if the picture is followed by important and conclusive/logical information that confirm the image presented through the picture on Instagram. Therefore it can also be a threat if used wrong: people might get the impression that a destination of business re-invented themselves and the customer is then let-down by a totally different image, say on the company's website.

**11) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? and which Target group would fit best?**

It definitely could be used by certain 25hours hotels. Especially the 25hours Hotel No.1, which is designed in a 60s-vintage-style can use the filters of Instagram to get the pictures posted on Facebook in line with the design of the hotel. Also other hotels of the 25hours hotel company have retro or vintage interior and objects that can put into a different and appropriate perspective when photographed with Instagram.

Since these pictures are exclusively published through social media it definitely is targeted at people using Facebook, twitter or Instagram.

**12) What do you think the future holds?**

As long as the retro and vintage movement continues Instagram will be up and running. However, as we saw in the past, trends change and people might lose or shift interest. No one can actually say if or when this will happen and so we just have to react to the developments, see what the future holds or even better design and influence it ourselves.

## **Appendix 4 Interview 4**

**Conducted: April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013**

**Philipp Stol, Director of Sales**

**Age: 44**

**Agil Touristic & Services**

**Contact Data: [stol@agiltouristic.at](mailto:stol@agiltouristic.at)**

### **1) Instagram: First thoughts:**

It is a current trend, if it is lasting though, stays questionable: But it is a sort of communication

### **2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?**

No

### **3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

### **4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

Not really, the concept behind Instagram is innovative, but the individuals using it do not contribute creativity.

### **5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

As already mentioned it is a trend, but it is questionable if it lasts, and if for how long. It could be trendy for some years, however technology is in ongoing change and development and who knows maybe Instagram will be replaced that is technically even more sophisticated...

### **6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication?(Why, Why not?)**

Yes, it is a visual form of communication. "A Picture is worth a thousand Words"

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C (consumer to consumer) to B2C (Business to Consumer) or even to C2B (Consumer to business) interchange?**

Instagram is a trendy “game”; however it is not qualified or suitable for Business to Business (b2b). Most probably Facebook will tail off sooner or later...

In the consumer to business Concept Instagram could be used in a rating platform to visualize the review, critics or positive moments.

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

The biggest potential is in advertising, with the focus on the young audience  
Maybe there is a potential for destination management organisations. Instagram could evolve to an opportunity for the Vienna Tourism Board or the Austrian National Tourism Board. However, it does not prove any usability for incoming tourism organisations and incoming partners from abroad.

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or Why not?**

Maybe it cannot change the perception or even image of an entire destination but Instagram provides a lot of subjectivity. A subjective impression of a destination is given.

**10) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

It is no genuine threat, as the individuals have access to other sources. Images of destinations already exist through different media, and if a person is interested to travel somewhere or so, he will go back to more “classic” source of information.



**11) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? and which Target group would fit best? // Or for which business could it fit best? How would it be implemented? Which target group? Which potential does it have for the tourism sector?**

For our business Instagram is of no use, as we are an income tourism agency working with income partners and intermediaries from abroad.

**12) What do you think the future holds?**

Instagram is a trend, but how long it will be used..cannot be foreseen. But most probably it will tail off soonest.

## **Appendix 5 Interview 5**

**Conducted: May 5<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Christian Hellinger, BA**

**Age: 28**

**Tourism Agency**

**Contact Data: chris\_helliger@yahoo.de**

**Christian Hellinger – Advertising Agency**

### **1) Instagram: First thoughts**

The idea is fairly good, but it runs the risk to become a self-selling item, that brings up the question if this is any good for businesses.

It is a huge platform which is often mentioned in the same breath as Facebook or Twitter

It is a adequate channel for today; A channel that expresses visual perception  
But what is its true use? Or Advantage?

For creative people and artists the function of Instagram could be too little.

Through Instagram however everything seems wicked and lush. It reminds of the “behind the scenes” Band tour or CD Booklet/ Cover, It also illustrates a “Rocker Image”.

Instagram is used similar to blogs but uncommented.

### **2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?**

No

### **3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

**4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art?  
(Why, Why not?)**

If the concept and context allow it – and if the picture manages to express something, why not? What is art nowadays?!

**5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

The question is, who is behind all that?, Instagram has the advantage that Facebook “backs” them.

Further individuals have the opportunity to just “go for it”, taking pictures any time. Faster and more of them.

Furthermore, individuals have a new channel of expression, they can depict and express the way they see the world. The Individual can express him or herself and give the others the opportunity to recognize similarities.

However to achieve persistence, Instagram misses the “push” factors, currently it is too much “pull”.

**6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication?(Why, Why not?)**

Yes, it is a visual form; however it is not as interactive as other media channels, which can be a disadvantage

Furthermore, individuals have a new channel of expression, they can depict and express the way they see the world. The Individual can express him or herself and give the others the opportunity to recognize similarities

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C (consumer to consumer) to B2C (Business to Consumer) or even to C2B (Consumer to business) interchange?**

C2C: At the moment it is a blessing and a curse. For promotional issues this could be bad, it could be the case that information and opinions about a brand are spread but without the business being in control of it. Thinking of the ratings on Amazon: Some films got bad ratings, but merely because of the quality of the DVDs which had little to do with the quality of the film. This could happen also to Instagram pictures.

B2C/C2B: B2C and C2B could merge to one channel of communication. Conducting active marketing in terms of "Show us your Coca-Cola moment". This can also be seen as a creative way of conducting market research: when and in which situation do the people consume "our" product. This would be a "Push" effect.

The user could provide moments of reality, which then could also be used as advertising (free of charge). This however is a double-edged sword: Presenting the new web 2.0 concept in a different light. With Instagram one could also establish a new way of building up confidence to consumers.

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

See above..

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or Why not?**

**10)**

Individuals perceive the photo as beautiful when it is being given a certain style. Some only cherish the moment when it is being published or uploaded on Facebook or Instagram.

Further the mobile phone takes on the role of the DIA-shows of former times: If friends meet and talk about moments or events they thought were awesome they underline their story by using their mobile phone and showing pictures they took.

However Instagram also gives the opportunity to combine virtuality with reality: in order to take the picture, to process it through the filter and upload it, the individual has had to be at the scene of event.

A destination does not have anything to lose; it is more of a chance! – It wins credibility.

People want contiguity and credibility. (thinking of the Stephansdom: the tourist will never see it as it is depicted in travel brochures, but the way it is depicted in Instagram, despite the filters, shows the Stephansdom in an angle they would observe it!

The perception can be changed, as it is not an unadorned picture that is being uploaded but it reminds of a snapshot.

**11) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

Businesses should engage with it now and make use of Instagram, but in long term no longer. It is like a picturesque Facebook. Soon one will no longer need Instagram to produce such pictures (filter function will be integrated soon on mobile phones and other apps, maybe even as a “basic”).

**12) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? and which Target group would fit best? // Or for which business could it fit best? How would it be implemented? Which target group? Which potential does it have for the tourism sector?**

PR Agencies: could use it as web 2.0 will grow even stronger.

Classic Advertising: not really as there is no “push” function at the moment.

Campaigns: Yes, why not? Could picture something like “Behind the scenes” maybe. But the target group would be young and fancy.

In tourism there is a high potential. – One can imagine it well!

**13) What do you think the future holds?**

With Social Media and in Web 2.0 everything is possible: there will be a high period, but followed by disenchantment. At the moment Facebook is losing presence and power (basically users). Facebook is decreasing.

Revolutions are no longer as big and strong as they used to be. Individuals no longer have to overcome ones inhibitions concerning social media and expressing and presenting one publicly. Neither individuals nor businesses can withdraw from social media, it is part of our “social” lives.

## **Appendix 6 Interview 6**

**Received: May 14<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**R. K.**

**Age: 41**

**Nationality: Austrian**

**Graphic Designer**

**Contact Data: /**

**A. K., Marketing**

**Age:/**

**Nationality: Austrian**

**Contact Data: /**

### **1) Instagram: First thoughts:**

- social network, app

### **2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?**

- no

### **3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

### **4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

- no – maybe in exceptional cases as kind of social-action-art – but not as artwork

### **5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

It conforms to 2013

### **6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication?(Why, Why not?)**

Yes, -such as others take part at your privacy

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C (consumer to consumer) to B2C (Business to Consumer) or even to C2B (Consumer to business) interchange?**

- maybe with embedded commercials

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

- maybe - used as a commercial platform but not for professional work

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or Why not?**

- digital filters cannot change images of landscapes, cities etc – it's a kind of modification or distortion – no change

**10) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

- could be – depends on destination and not on digital filters

**11) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? And which Target group would fit best or for which business could it fit best? How would it be implemented? Which target group? Which potential does it have for the tourism sector?**

- in companies distributing online commercials, tourism-online-ads – I think the audience

composition is between 13 – 26 years and only for individual private usage

**12) What do you think the future holds?**

- everything and nothing – but more than Instagram or other social shit



## **Appendix 7 Interview 7**

**Received: May 18<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Sebastian Harding, Student Tourism and Hospitality Management**

**Age: 21**

**Nationality: British**

**Contact Data: 0043 (0)6605459830**

**Instagram: First thoughts:**

Cool way of sharing one's own photos with friends!

**2) Do you as an individual use Instagram? Yes**

**3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

For personal use – uploading my own photos, looking at friends photos (as well as those from other popular Instagram users)

**4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

Yes, some of the photos can be extremely beautiful. However, many of the photos are very similar and in that sense they lose their appeal. Furthermore, many photos are heavily edited which can change ones perception on that photo.

**5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

In my opinion, Instagram is still growing considerably. More and more of my friends are beginning to join the craze. However, many Instagram followers who have been using the tool from an early phase have since stopped using it. I believe that such

individuals join up in order to see what the craze is all about and then show no further interest.

**6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication? (Why, Why not?)**

Yes, it communicates the image of a destination/company. Or at least the image that the destination/company wants consumers to see.

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C to B2C or even to C2B interchange?  
Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

There are already examples of B2C, for example certain TV companies upload photos of behind the scenes footage. Similar activities used by hotels/airlines etc could give a tourist the feeling of being more involved.

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)?  
Why or Why not?**

I do not think that individuals will look at photos of a particular destination via Instagram. I believe most people will search photos via search engine sites such as Google.com. In that sense, I believe that it is a waste of time for a destination to have an Instagram account as photos can be viewed elsewhere.

On the other hand, should an individual stumble across the Instagram account of a particular destination and enjoy the photos that they see, then this make create future potential customers. Thus, I can also see the benefits of maintaining an Instagram account. Furthermore, I see a potential use for Instagram as a tool for spreading information when it comes to natural disasters in an area or for potential war zones.

It is my opinion, from a tourism perspective, Instagram has great potential in promoting a hotel chain, or similar establishments. Uploading photos of a variety of hotels in various destinations, depicting the changing styles and designs across the year, is a good way of selling a particular hotel chain.

**10) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

See above answer.

**11) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? and which Target group would fit best?**

N/A

**12) What do you think the future holds?**

Instagram will continue to grow and become more popular. It is a fun way of interacting with a consumer but perhaps not an essential means by which to communicate with them.

## **Appendix 8 Interview 8**

**Received: May 25<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Jonathan Hess, Student, Tourism and Hospitality Management**

**Age: 21**

**Nationality: Austrian**

**Contact Data: [hess@audio-co.com](mailto:hess@audio-co.com)**

**1) Instagram: First thoughts:** Hipster, Brooklyn

**2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?** No

**3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

**4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

It depends if the original picture without Instagram filters is artistic than it can be seen as art, if one takes a random picture than puts a filter over it to make it look artsy, I don't think it can be considered art.

**5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

I think Instagram itself is a phase, but taking pictures and editing them will definitely persist.

**6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication?(Why, Why not?)**

I think it does if somebody shares an Instagram picture, he at the same time gives price to something he is doing.

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C (Consumer to Consumer) to B2C (Business to Consumer) or even to C2B (Consumer to Business) interchange?**

I don't think so

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

Maybe for advertising campaigns

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or Why not?**

I don't really think so, if someone can't see the beauty of a place without a filter he will defiantly not change this inability with filter functions.

**10) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

I don't think it can be a threat to a destination or a opportunity if somebody takes a picture with a filter anymore than somebody taking a picture without a filter.

## **Appendix 9 Interview 9**

**Conducted: Mach 8<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Anonymous, Male**

**Age: 29**

**Nationality: Russian**

**Contact Data:**

### **1) Instagram: First thoughts:**

One of the few social media platforms that communicates visually.

Simple Concept: upload picture with ready filters: Kind of "Filter to go".

A digitalization of Lomography and Polaroid.

Easy way to be "hip", just press the button.

### **2) Do you as an individual use Instagram?**

Yes

### **3) If yes, in which context, when and why?**

To communicate visually. It's a mixture of Tumblr and Facebook, but no real new form of communication.

### **4) Do you believe photos processed through Instagram could be seen as art? (Why, Why not?)**

Instagram itself not, the pictures of normal consumers have usually not the potential. It interprets reality. With art the concept is important not the filter functions.

### **5) Do you think it is a Trend, a phase or does it have the potential to develop persistence?**

Currently it's a trend. The people who do not have it (yet) decide if it's a trend or not, and if yes how long it would last.

### **6) Could Instagram be seen as a sort of communication?(Why, Why not?)**

Its communication that is based visually, a mixture of Facebook and Tumblr

**7) Could Instagram change from C2C (consumer to consumer) to B2C (Business to Consumer) or even to C2B (Consumer to business) interchange?**

I see potential in tourism, as Instagram is a “social code”: modern- DMO have to differentiate each other. And maybe the products they offer. It would give DMOs the opportunity to differentiate from mass tourism. In some ways they can build nostalgic bridges in a humorous way. B2C is possible, and should be used. The consumers decide and demand it.

**8) Could Instagram be used in business and if yes how?**

Mainly to differentiate.

**9) Do you think Instagram can change the perception of the surrounding, or even change the Image of the Destination (thinking of all the different filter functions)? Why or Why not?**

Depends on the message of the picture. For a nostalgic flair of an old Parisian Café Instagram makes sense and can enhance the image. And besides, it also is dependent on the educational background of each person.

**9) Thinking of the above stated question could this evolve to a threat or opportunity for destinations and/or businesses?**

Not really, it always depends on the destination management organizations and tourism businesses themselves, how they market.

**11) How could the use of Instagram look like explicitly for the company you work for? and which Target group would fit best? // Or for which business could it fit best? How would it be implemented? Which target group? Which potential does it have for the tourism sector?**

Mainly young people

**12) What do you think the future holds?**

The desire of less transparent lives will probably increase.

## Annex Pictures



Image 1 Lomography Camera:  
Diana F+  
(<http://www.emmajanation.com/tag/diana-f> , Accessed: June 9th 2013)



Image 2 Photo taken with Diana  
F+ Walking on the roof with @palkina  
and @zaruki\_zanogi Taken by  
masha\_njam  
(<http://www.lomography.com/photos/18468788>, Accessed: June 9<sup>th</sup>  
2013)





Image 3 Polaroid Camera  
([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaroid\\_OneStep.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaroid_OneStep.jpg), Accessed: June 9<sup>th</sup> 2013)



Image 4 Polaroid Photography,  
Helmut Newton, 1976, Westlicht  
(<http://wonderland.blogspot.co.at/2011/06/hadi-kitapigma-gel-tps-tps.htm>  
Accessed: June 9<sup>th</sup> 2013)



Image 5 Instamatic Camera  
([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaroid\\_OneStep.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaroid_OneStep.jpg) Accessed: June 9<sup>th</sup> 2013)



Image 6 Instamatic Photo,  
Worcester, MA, 1970  
(<http://averageus.com/tag/kodak-instamatic/> Accessed June 9<sup>th</sup> 2013)



Image 7 Instagram Logo  
(<http://news.softpedia.com/news/Instagram-for-Windows-Phone-Now-Rumored-for-a-June-26-Release-358882.shtml>) Accessed: (June 9th 2013)



Image 8 Instagram Picture from @NatGeo  
(<http://weblogit.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Instagram-Fotos.png>) Accessed June 9th 2013)