

# CASE STUDY ON ROMANIAN HOTELS' WEBSITES

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## ABSTRACT

In the past few years, Internet and Internet technologies became very popular and transformed all kind of businesses. The rate of connectivity to the Internet is and will be high for a long period of time. To be seen on the computer screens around the world, companies spent a lot of effort and huge amount of money to build a solid image of their products and/or services. Websites seems to be the best ever known method to penetrate virtually any kind of target market. Globalisation is just happening...

In Romania, tourism developement is a priority for the Government. As a consequence, hotel companies cannot stay apart. Thus, is interesting to visit and observe websites belonging to hospitality industry and find out how the Web service of the Internet is implemented at the level of this very important sector of Romanian economy.

**Case study objectives:** conduct research in order to find out the stage of developing specific websites for Romanian hotel organisations.

**Case study methods:** visit and analyse as many Romanian hotel and motel websites could be found in a reasonable period of time. Target number: 150 visited websites.

### 1. Finding the websites to be analysed

One of the most simple way of finding websites for a specific sector is to use one of the search engines like Magellan, Hot Bot, Lycos, Altavista etc. I personally prefer the advanced section of Google at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) where I started searching the key word **Hotels** contained in pages written in **Romanian** (fig.1).

Among about 8,750 webpages found (fig.2) it can be observed on the second position **HOTELS.RO** – Ghid online al hotelurilor din Romania (Online guide to hotels and other accomodation facilities throughout Romania) at [www.hotels.ro](http://www.hotels.ro) with sections in Romanian and English. The main page (in Romanian) of the site is shown in fig.3.

In the About **HOTELS.RO** section it could be found the following (fig.4):

"**HOTELS.RO** is a project dedicated to the promotion and development of romanian tourism. It consists from a database with information about the romanian hotels, motels, villas and chalets din Romania, information that we consider to be nearly exhaustive, based on the fact that it contains data on more than 1200 accommodation units. The database is completed by a powerful and versatile search engine, that allows user to perform searches based on a multitude of criteria, enough to accommodate any requirements. At this time, over 500 hotels in our database have detailed information or photos, and this number is increasing day by day. **HOTELS.RO** was developed by **POP!media Brasov** together with **FX Internet Bucuresti**. All data on this website, including the logo, graphics and the site's look and feel are copyrighted by the authors."

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It was very good to see that the database contains over 500 hotels with detailed information, photos and links to hotels' websites. But surprise: when clicking to the links I could find no more than 102 active websites. Either websites were not existing or the links were made in wrong way. As a consequence the analysis is limited to the 102 webpages found.

## **2. Hotels' websites pages or pages' content taken into consideration**

A hotel, motel or any other organisations' website can consist in a very large number of webpages, this number being dependent on many parameters (company dimension, field of activity, management, location, costs etc.). There are no fix number of pages per website but anybody can observe when surfing the Web that there are some "standard" pages. This case study took into consideration the pages named or containing the following:

1. **Welcome** – this page is designed to make visitors feel welcome to the hotel site. It offers the links which facilitate navigation and the possibility of rapidly finding the needed information. Also, it should contain original graphics able to illustrate the main message.
2. **Foreign languages versions** – facilitate the attraction of tourists from different target markets. For countries with limited speakers of their national language, it is recommended to have versions for widely spoken languages like English, French, Spanish, German and Italian.
3. **About us** – is the page which contains the company overview: goals, strengths and strategies. Also, it gives information about company roots and background, and – very important – a message from the owner or the general manager.
4. **Accommodation** – is the page with details about the rooms and/or apartments. Digital video clips and/or suggestive zoomed images are common ways to convince the visitor with a virtual tour of the hotel.
5. **Restaurant** – contains the data related to the restaurant affiliated to the hotel. A good impression can be made by including the menu, the prices and the opening hours. Special offer and delicious products are to be mentioned separately.
6. **Special services** – contains services like swimming pool, tennis, fitness, aerobic, solarium, medical assistance and all sort of outstanding services. It is the place where services can be promoted in order to differentiate the hotel/motel on the hospitality market.
7. **Human Resources** – this page might include brief biographies about key employees, in addition to a basic directory of current employees. It is designed according to database principles and provide mail and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers for each mentioned individual. It is recommended also to insert a photo for each individual.
8. **Jobs** – provides the company employment policies, details of how to compose and send Resumes (CV's), positions available, deadlines for applications and contact persons. It might contain subsections designed according to database principles for information regarding job requirements. A feedback online form is highly desirable.
9. **Contact information** – contains company location(s), a list of main departments and a brief description of them. It is recommended to include mail and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers, contact persons for each department. Photos should be included. A feedback form can help the hotel to get timely information from visitors to the site.

10. **Touristic attractions** – should be developed according to database principles. It contains the most attractive sites around the hotel/motel location. Hiperlinks, photos and digital videoclips are very welcome.
11. **Touristic Offer** – contains service packages offered with all detailed information. In case of many possibilities, it can be organized as a list with hiperlinks to pages with more detailed data.
12. **Online reservations** – this is probably one of the most important page of the entire website. Usualy it contains a complex form with many fields with validation buttons in order to be completed quickly and to avoid incomplete data. Visitor can choose the ways of confirmation the reservation (e-mail, phone, fax etc.).
13. **Other information** – is the pages that contains any other information not found in the other sections of the website. This can be developed according to database principles completed with hiperlinks, photos and digital video.
14. **Rates and tariffs** – includes rack rates for rooms/appartments of all kind gruped on certain criteria. This page also specifies the prices for all other services offered. Discount policies should be mentioned in a special section.
15. **Sitemap** – is the page which lets your visitors view the entire site at a glance. It usualy contains an image with active areas with hiperlinks to related pages.
16. **FAQ** – is a sistematicaly developed list which provides clear, concise answers to frequently-asked questions about your hotel and products/services available.
17. **Image archive** – it is designed to store important, interesant and suggestive images (historical and up-to-date) inside hotel/motel and its vicinity. It might contain subsections designed according to database principles. A good idea is to offer the visitor the possibility of sending electronic postcards.
18. **Other** – it is not compulsory a page or a set of pages. Any hotel website should have a Guestbook with the oppinion of people and a separate section for VIP's. Graphics is a crucial aspect and attractive colors is a determinant factor to continue visiting. Type of buttons, forms, animation and many other factors are "steeling" the attention and determine the visitor to "stay" more than initially planned. These are some of the most difficult components to be taken into consideration when analysing websites. At this point it was quantified the site's attractivity, surfing easiness and the loading speed.

The pages listed above should have valuable information for all kind of visitors, especialy for those willing to accommodate or make preparations for an event (conference, seminar, business presentation, wedding etc.). Briefly, after the analisys, all visited sites and qualificatives (very poor, poor, good, very good and excellent) were arranged in a table (MS Excel). Finaly, for each qualificative it was given a certain number of points: 1 for very poor, 2 for poor, 3 for good, 4 for very good and 5 for excellent. If the site does not contain a specific page, the cell in the table have a "-" (dash). The results are given below (Table 1...5).

Table 1

Qualificative	Number of pages quoted with	Name of the page or its content				
		Welcome	Foreign Languages Versions	About Us	Accommodation	Restaurant
N/A	"-"	16	21	8	4	25
Very poor	"1"	1	6	3	1	2
Poor	"2"	5	6	4	7	8
Good	"3"	36	31	33	42	29
Very good	"4"	30	20	47	46	33
Excellent	"5"	14	18	7	2	5

Table 2

Qualificative	Number of pages quoted with	Name of the page or its content				
		Special Services	Human Resources	Jobs	Contact Information	Touristic Attractions
N/A	"-"	37	98	101	9	27
Very poor	"1"	2	2	0	2	5
Poor	"2"	6	0	0	4	15
Good	"3"	20	1	0	30	21
Very good	"4"	31	1	0	49	20
Excellent	"5"	6	0	1	8	14

Table 3

Qualificative	Number of pages quoted with	Name of the page or its content				
		Touristic Offer	Online Reservations	Other information	Rates and Tariffs	Sitemap
N/A	"-"	69	54	33	37	100
Very poor	"1"	2	2	2	2	2
Poor	"2"	6	5	12	2	0
Good	"3"	10	5	33	22	0
Very good	"4"	10	28	14	34	0
Excellent	"5"	5	8	8	5	0

Table 4

Qualificative	Number of pages quoted with	Name of the page or its content				
		FAQ	Image Archive	Attractivity	Surfing Easiness	Loading Speed
N/A	"-"	102	10	3	8	2
Very poor	"1"	0	6	0	1	0
Poor	"2"	0	12	9	3	6
Good	"3"	0	37	40	41	19
Very good	"4"	0	28	47	45	64
Excellent	"5"	0	9	3	4	11

Table 5

NAME	SYMBOL	NUMBER OF SITES	NAME	SYMBOL	NUMBER OF SITES
Hotel chain	-	1	Iasi	IS	1
Alba	AB	1	Maramures	MM	3
Arad	AR	1	Mures	MS	3
Bucuresti	B	9	Neamt	NT	2
Bihor	BH	1	Olt	OT	1
Brasov	BV	13	Prahova	PH	3
Buzau	BZ	1	Sibiu	SB	8
Cluj	CJ	10	Suceava	SV	10
Caras-Severin	CS	3	Tulcea	TL	3
Constanta	CT	9	Timisoara	TM	11
Dolj	DJ	1	Valcea	VL	1
Galati	GL	3	Republic of Moldova	RM	1
Harghita	HR	2			

**IMPORTANT:** The MS Excel files containing the above data and related charts – Romanian and English versions – can be found in my personal website at [www.geocities.com/liciniu/](http://www.geocities.com/liciniu/) in the Research section.

Fig.5 shows the English version – the sheet with the data. The file contains 20 charts – fig.6 shows only the first one.

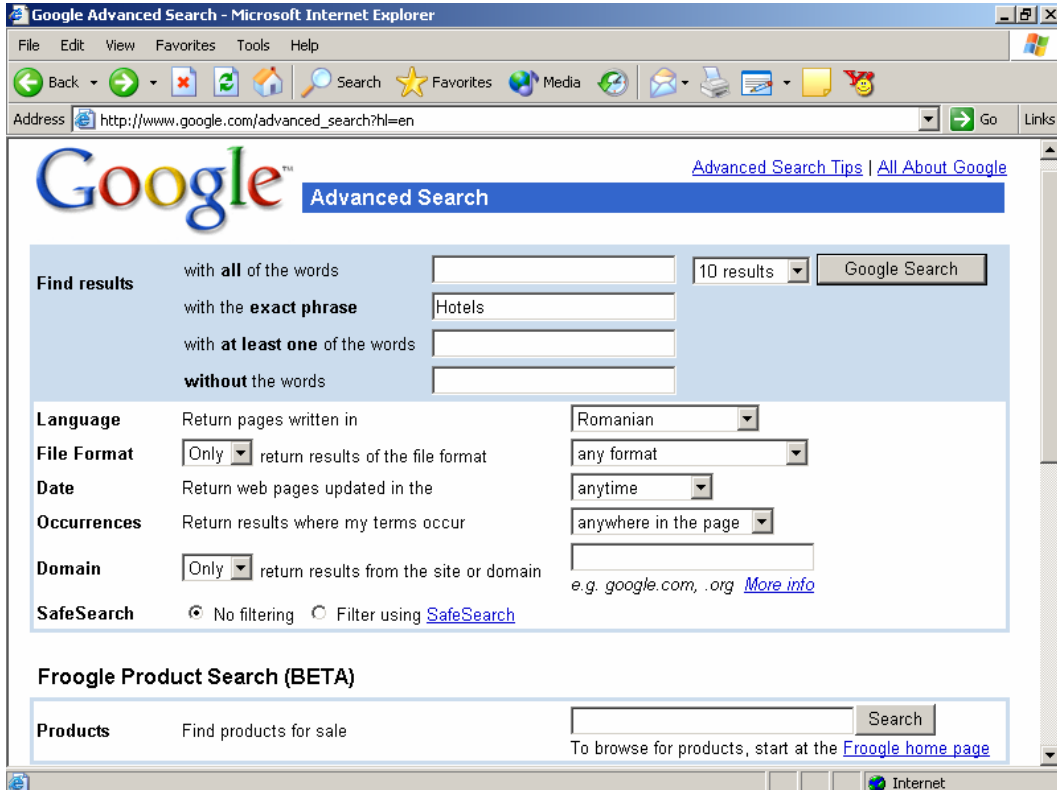


Fig.1. Searching key word Hotels in webpages written in Romanian

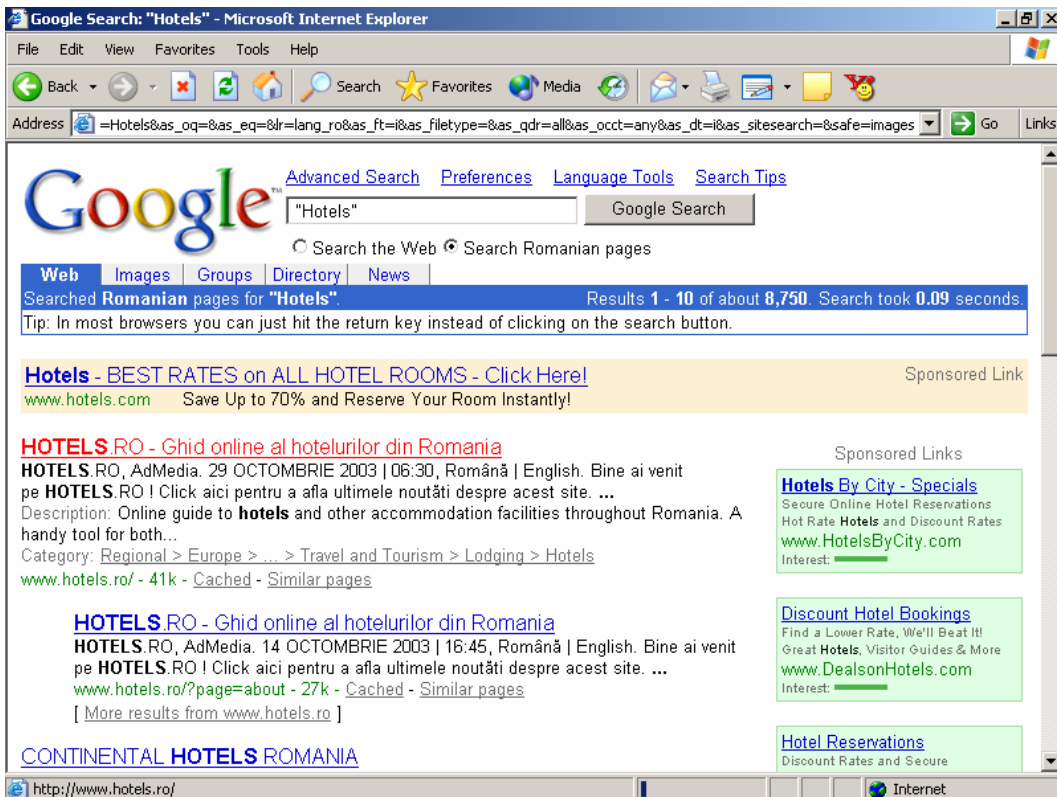


Fig.2. About 8,750 pages found and HOTELS.RO on the second position



Fig.3. HOTELS.RO – the main page (in Romanian) of the site

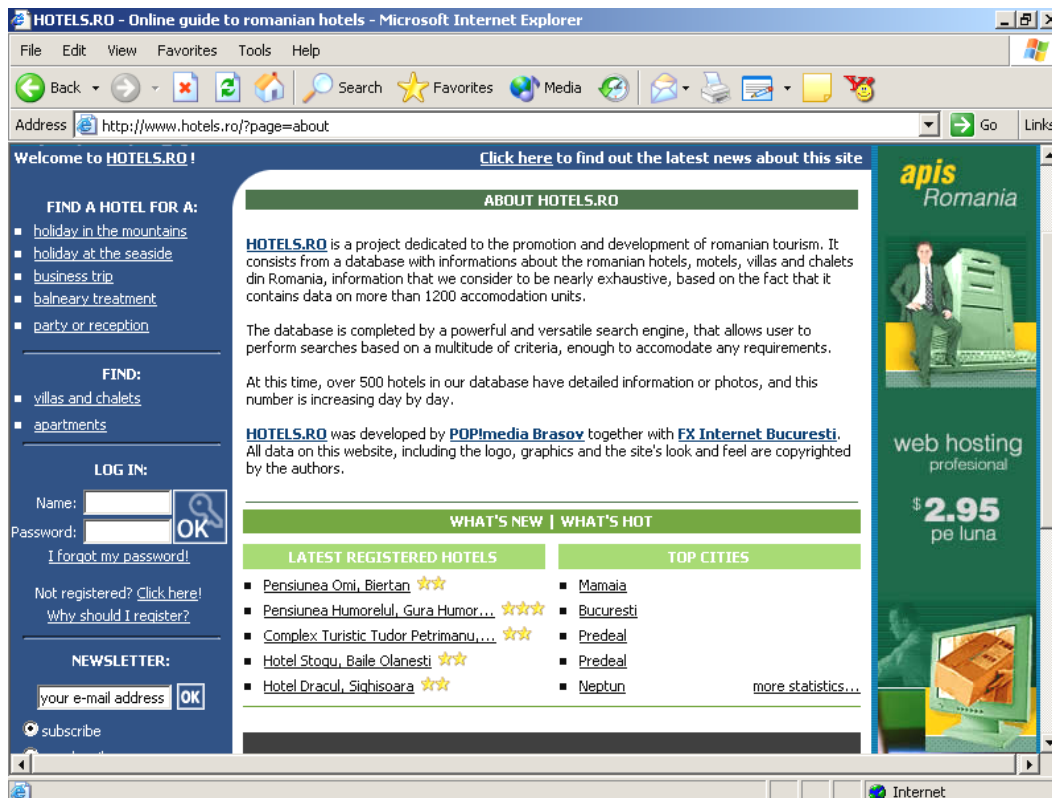


Fig. 4. – About HOTELS.RO page of the site

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Web Address	Hotel/Motel Name	County	Welcome	Foreign Languages Versions	About Us	Accommodation
94	www.hotel2000.ro	Hotel 2000	TM	-	-	-	-
95	www.ambassador.ro	Hotel Ambassador	TM	4	5	4	4
96	www.hotel-central.ro	Hotel Central	TM	3	3	3	2
97	www.hotelclubsenator.ro	Hotel Club Senator	TM	3	3	4	4
98	www.hotelcontinental.ro	Hotel Continental	TM	3	2	3	3
99	www.hotelperla.dnltm.ro	Hotel Perla	TM	3	2	3	3
100	www.hotel-reghina.ro	Hotel Reghina	TM	3	2	5	5
101	www.sydney.hotel.banat.ro	Hotel Sydney	TM	3	4	4	4
102	www.yellow-hotel.ro	Yellow Hotel	TM	5	4	2	3
103	www.bradisor.ro/rom	Cabana Bradisor	VL	3	3	4	4
104							
	Qualificatives			Welcome	Foreign Languages Versions	About Us	Accommodation
105							
106	N/A	Number of pages quoted with "-"		16	21	8	4
107	Very poor	Number of pages quoted with "1"		1	6	3	1
108	Poor	Number of pages quoted with "2"		5	6	4	7
109	Good	Number of pages quoted with "3"		36	31	33	42
110	Very good	Number of pages quoted with "4"		30	20	47	46
111	Excellent	Number of pages quoted with "5"		14	18	7	2
112							
113		Total number of quoted pages =		102	102	102	102

Fig.5. – The MS Excel file containing initial and analysed data

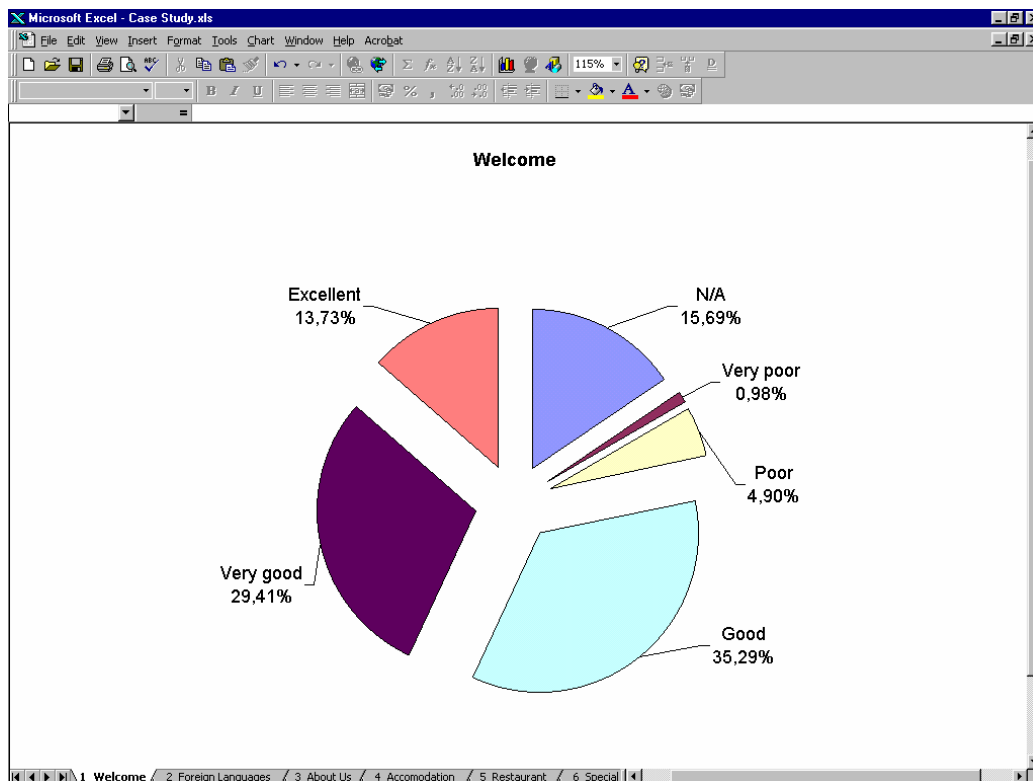


Fig.6. – The MS Excel file containing related charts (20) to analysed data

### 3. Conclusions

1. Despite the information that the database at HOTELS.RO contains more than 500 hotels, it was impossible to visit more than 102 sites – about 20%;
2. The pages "Welcome" and "Foreign Languages Versions" are concentrated between good and excellent. The same qualificatives apply to "Loading Speed";
3. The pages "About Us, "Accommodation" and "Contact Information" are concentrated in the good and very good area;
4. The page "Touristic Attraction" is spread between not existing to excellent;
5. The page "Online Reservations" is either not existing or very good;
6. The pages "Human Resources", "Jobs", "Sitemap" and "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" are not existing or like not existing;
7. Too many sites have no updated information;
8. Only about 50% of the number of counties from within Romania are represented in HOTELS.RO website. Very few hotel/motel organizations are represented for each county: from 1 (the majority) to 13 – Braşov, 11 – Timiş, 10 – Cluj and Suceava.
9. In general, the other sections of the majority of visited webpages are well represented and contain valuable information.

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