The Way of Saint James and the Xacobeo 2010 in the tourism websites of the Spanish autonomous communities

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Abstract: This article analyses the tourism websites of Spanish autonomous communities crossed by the Way of Saint James. Considering that the Way of Saint James and the Xacobeo 2010 are important touristic opportunities for these autonomous regions, the main objective of this investigation is to evaluate the information about these touristic places in their tourism websites. The analysis focused on two aspects: firstly, establishing whether the autonomous communities have used the Way of Saint James and the Xacobeo 2010 to promote themselves, and secondly, evaluating the quality of the websites. The study included a literature review, definition of concepts and criteria to measure the quality of websites, and the analysis of the content and design of the selected tourism websites. The results show that the Galician website is the most complete in terms of information about the Way of Saint James and the Xacobeo 2010. The information about the Way of Saint James and the Xacobeo 2010 in the websites of the other communities is vague and differs from one website to another. Due to the touristic significance of the Xacobeo 2010 and the importance of Internet as a medium of communication, the research group plans to conduct a new analysis of the communities' institutional websites in 2011.

Keywords: The Way of Saint James; Xacobeo; communication; website; autonomous communities of Spain.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 1.1. Tourism in the Way of Saint James. 1.2. Institutional communication and advertising. 1.3. Tourism websites. 2. Methodology. 3. Results. 4. Conclusions. 5. Bibliographic references. 6. Notes.

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1. Introduction

Tourism can be studied from a multidisciplinary perspective. It is a sector that is undergoing a continuous and permanent process of change. For these reasons there are many studies offering complex analyses on this sector.

From an economic perspective, tourism is one of the most important sectors of the world economy, and the first national industry in Spain. Without considering the current economic crisis, in 2000 the tourism demand accounted for 11.6% of Spain's GDP, but it decreased almost one percentage point in 2007 (10.7%). Needless to say, the management of tourism information is of outstanding importance for public and private agencies. Internet is among the best media to promote touristic activities and thus the use of websites is essential for any company in the sector. These reasons justify the study of tourism websites from the academic field, where the economic studies are by far the most numerous.

From the perspective of communication studies, in Spain there are few works addressing the touristic image or corporate advertising of the autonomous communities, and there are even fewer ones addressing the image created by touristic destinations through their advertising. Studies on the image that international tourists have of Spain's autonomous communities are also few. Similarly, the studies on the performance of the autonomous communities' institutional tourism are few and very recent [1]. This is one of the reasons that justify our work. The other reason is that in 2010 Spain celebrates the Xacobeo, one of the most important, although temporary, touristic events, next to the Way of St. James.

The Way of St. James is the star product of Galicia's tourism policy, and is also considered as one of the interregional brands in Spain's national Plan of Objectives for the Promotion of Tourism Overseas. Precisely, on the occasion of the Xacobeo 2010, the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce signed an agreement with the communities of Aragon, Basque Country, Asturias, Cantabria, Castile and León, Galicia, La Rioja, and Navarre to increase the international visibility of this touristic-cultural circuit.

Among the promotional activities, online promotion is one of the most important. In fact, the official tourism website of Spain has already posted a direct link to a page about the Way of St. James, which provides information about the two most celebrated routes: the French Way and the Northern Way.

Thus, both the Way of St. James and the Xacobeo 2010 are opportunities and competitive advantages for the aforementioned autonomous communities (and other communities crossed by other historic routes) to stand out above other touristic destinations. And their institutional websites are one of the means to take advantage of these opportunities.
That is why this research is aimed at examining the treatment given to the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James in the tourism websites of the autonomous communities crossed by the Jacobean historic routes (Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Castile-La Mancha, Navarre, Basque

Country, La Rioja, Cantabria, Asturias, Andalusia, Extremadura, Castile and León, and Galicia). The particular objectives are: 1) to determine the quality of these tourism websites; and 2) to verify whether they use the Xacobeo 2010 event and the Way of St. James for the promotion of their own territories.

The initial hypothesis is that Galicia's institutional tourism website is the most complete in terms of information about the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James; while the other communities crossed by the Jacobean routes have also included information on the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James because to enhance their touristic attractions.

1. 1. Tourism in the Ways of Saint James

Talking about tourism in the Way of St. James implies we are talking about a type of tourism -religious tourism-, which is not free from certain conceptual and terminological complexity, because the Way of St. James has exceeded its original and historical religious meaning and has increasingly become a route in which the spiritual and religious purposes coexist with cultural, ecologic, environmental and sports purposes. This form of tourism has barely attracted interest among Spanish researchers, and the major studies on this subject come from Anglo-Saxon countries (Cánoves, 2006: 64).

However, in the last decade the interest on the subject of tourism increased in Spain, where Santiago, the city and the route, has become one of the most studied touristic destinations (Gigirey, 2003; Santos, 2006; Herrero, 2009; Alonso, 2009). Recently, the *Cuadernos de Turismo* journal presented, in its 18th issue, a monograph on the diverse touristic destinations for religious and pilgrimage purposes in Spanish towns: El Rocío (Villa Diaz), La Javierada (Porcal), Santo Toribio de Liébana (Gil-de-Arribas), Monserrat (Cánoves), and Caravaca de la Cruz (Andrés and Espejo).

With regards to the concept of religious tourism, most studies address the adequacy, delimitation and use of this term. *Stricto sensu*, Esteve-Secall (2009: 25) considers religious tourism as "a touristic activity through which those who carry it out intend to achieve spiritual grace and proximity, immersion or contact with sacred entities". He also believes that we should distinguish the cultural-religious tourism from the ecological-spiritual and religious-spectacle tourism types.

The main difference lies in the purpose: religious tourism seeks spiritual grace; cultural-religious tourism seeks admiration and enjoyment of intangible cultural and religious heritages (cultural events, concerts, etc.); ecologic-spiritual tourism seeks the enjoyment of places of religious significance (e.g. landscapes and routes); and finally, the religious-spectacle tourism focuses on the attendance to popular religious events, linked to the aforementioned festivities (Esteve-Secall, 2009: 26).

Cánoves (2006: 65) offers a more condensed definition which considers that what distinguishes these forms of tourism are, first of all, the necessarily religious purposes of those who embark on the journey. The internationally-agreed definition of tourism assumes as touristic activities those undertaken during visits to places for a consecutive period of under one year of duration, for the purpose of entertainment, business and others. This implies that "other" purposes include the religious activities, but also that, taking the literal sense of the definition, that these "other" purposes are different from "entertainment purposes".

While it is true that the religious meaning has traditionally referred to pilgrimages, in contemporary times these activities have also coexisted and merged with other purposes.

As a social event, the phenomenon of religious and pilgrimage tourism, after their link to the post-Fordist tourism, is an activity in line with social changes, and for this reason it is "increasingly […] a cultural tourism with religious orientation" (Cánoves, 2006: 68). This observation was taken into account in 1985 by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to consider religious tourism as part of the cultural category: "the movement of persons due to essentially cultural motivations as study travels, travels to festivals and another artistic events, visits to places and monuments, travels to explore the nature, the art, the folklore and the pilgrimages" (UNWTO).

In addition, religion does not escape commercialisation, i.e. the logic of the market and consumption, especially when religion is developed under a tourist form. With the passage of time, pilgrimages have been increasingly transformed into touristic events that respond to the marketing of products that energises the Church: in the temples that are "important centres of pilgrimage [...] tourists' uses are intertwined with the devotional practices of the pilgrims, [which puts together] two logics: that of tourism which aims to transform the devotion into a spectacle and that of Catholics who seek to turn the spectacle into an opportunity to promote their religion" (De-la-Torre and Gutiérrez-Zúñiga, 2005: 59-60).

In the case of the Way of St. James, we clearly observe this conciliation of touristic-religious logics and models: on the one hand, the historic-religious tradition of the tomb of the apostle Saint James, and on the other, the economic, social and consumption changes of recent years.

When the city of Santiago de Compostela became famous after UNESCO declared it a world heritage site in 1985, and after 1993 when the city started promoting the Way of St. James as the main product of Galicia's tourism policy, the attraction of this site and of the city has transcended their original religious symbolism. The city and the Way of Saint James are visited by tourists and pilgrims who are driven by their creed, but especially by the economic and spiritual attractions, and beautiful landscapes of these sites.

Precisely, since the Xacobeo of 1993, which had 99,436 pilgrims, the holy year of Saint James has become an event of growing interest for thousands of people. In 1999, it reached

154,613 pilgrims and in 2004 179.944. This arrival of pilgrims has followed a seasonal behaviour, where the holy years have been preceded and followed by a timid and variable flow. The temporary concentration in Santiago began to change since the last Xacobeo in 2004: it obtained relevant figures that were not following the seasonal behaviour. According to the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela, 93.924 pilgrims visited the city in 2005; 100.377 in 2006; 114.026 in 2007; 125.133 in 2008, and 145.877 in 2009.

Changes in touristic trends are attributable to various strategic actions, including the Plan of tourist excellence that Santiago de Compostela developed between 2001 and 2005, whose objective was to improve the provision of tourist services for the Xacobeo 2004.

Other important actions include the implementation of the "Strategic Plan of infrastructure and transport of the Ministry of Public Works to be completed in 2020", which aims to convert the city of Santiago into one of the main railway and highways nodes in Galicia and a regional airport; and the "Strategic Plan of development in Santiago de Compostela" (2007), which is based on strategic axes such as the economic diversification of the city, the enhancement of accessibility and mobility, the improvement of its appeal, the quality of life, knowledge, social cohesion and sustainability, and the collaboration between the different institutions located in Santiago.

Despite the figures unveiled by the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela suggest an increase of pilgrims and their high religious motivation (in 2009, 42.63% claimed "religious reasons"; 48.20%, "religious motivation and others" and only 9.17% "not religious"), several sources present a different picture. Data from the Tourist Observatory of Santiago on the tourist demand in the city from 2005 to 2007 indicate that the percentage of tourists with "religious motivations" ranged between 2.8% and 4.6%.

Santos-Xolla (2006: 142) has reviewed data from different authors and studies, which confirm the decline of religious motivations. He includes the data offered by the Tourism Observatory of the Way of St. James, where religion ranked sixth, with 21%, which is quite far from purposes related to spiritualism, heritage sites, sports, or natural attractions.

There is no doubt that Galicia's strategic policy has increased the touristic appeal of the city, by promoting and diversifying its touristic offer. This has also favoured the homogenisation of demand during Jacobean years. These plans and actions have had a positive influence in the increase of visitors. There is also no doubt that the pilgrim and walker -tourist and/or excursionist- of Santiago have changed in terms of motivations but also in relation to the Way of Saint James whose original definition in the *Codex Calixtinus* has been transformed: in addition to the historical routes, currently the tour includes paths and branches, which draws an increasingly complex and sometimes surprising map.

The fifth book of the *Codex Calixtinus* [2] (12th century) describes the routes that began in France, crossed the Pyrenees and joined the one coming from Somport (which is the

beginning of the Aragonese Way) in *Puente la Reina* (Navarra), to form the way to Santiago de Compostela. This is the so-called French Way, which crosses from east to west the autonomous communities of Navarre, La Rioja and Castile and León, Spain, and finally Galicia. Another historic route is the Northern Way, which runs through the communities of the Basque Country, Cantabria and Asturias.

Over the centuries other ways that virtually cross all the Iberian Peninsula have been developed and so there are many Spanish communities that are crossed by them. From the south, *Vía de La Plata* starts in Seville and crosses Extremadura and Castile and León. In the northeast, the *Ruta del Ebro* begins in Tortosa, crosses Catalonia and Aragon, and ends in Logroño; the *Camino de Levante* starts in Valencia and crosses Castile-La Mancha and Castile and León, and ends in Toro; finally in the southeast there are two routes that start in Alicante and terminate in Benavente (Zamora) and Burgos; they are the so-called *Camino del Sureste* and *La Lana* route, respectively.

So officially there are 13 autonomous communities and seven routes, by there could be more considering the numerous branches that are linked to the main routes. The Jacobean event is a touristic opportunity for associations and municipalities which do not hesitate to develop new Jacobean routes. A recent initiative was presented on 10 March, 2010, in the *Información de Alicante* journal: "Benidorm goes on a pilgrimage to the Way of St. James. The city becomes the official starting point of a new branch of the well-known *Ruta de Sureste*; [the objective, according to the President of the Association of friends of the *Camino de Alicante*,] is to offer new incentives for people who like hiking and also for pilgrims who want to take this adventure."

In a conversation with Miguel Soldevila, chief of staff of Benidorm's City Council, he told us that the author of this initiative was the Association of friends of the *Camino de Alicante*, and that the City Council thought it was very interesting because it was another way to promote Benidorm and increase its visibility. The association confirmed that they requested the City Council to let them use that branch in order to facilitate access to the main route for all the pilgrims from different localities, even though there is no historical basis for this.

This local event can be interpreted as an indicator of the high interest in using the Way of St. James to promote localities. Its global dimension can be observed in the agreement signed on 26 February, 2010, by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce with eight autonomous communities, as part of the Strategic Plan of action for the international touristic promotion and marketing of the Way of St. James, which the Council of Ministers approved on 24 July, 2009 **[3]**.

The aim of this agreement is to increase the international visibility of Santiago's cultural-touristic circuit, which involves various joint marketing and advertising actions aimed at strengthening the positioning of the touristic destinations and products related to the Way of St. James. One of the most important promotional activities is made online. In fact, Spain's official tourism website (http://www.spain.info/) has posted a link to a page about the Way,

with varied and rich information for interested tourists. This page shows the two most celebrated Jacobean routes: the French and Northern Ways.

These routes cross the communities of Aragon, the Basque Country, Asturias, Cantabria, Castile and León, Galicia, La Rioja and Navarre, i.e. those communities that have already signed the collaboration agreement for touristic promotion abroad with the Ministry.
The pilgrims and/or tourists (regardless of their interests and motivations), who are attracted by the phenomenon of the Xacobeo in 2010 and are interested in some of the Ways of St. James, require information on the basic and traditional products (e.g. accommodation and restaurants), but also on essential products within this tourist modality: maps, tours, cultural heritage, and beautiful landscapes.

It is logic to think that the Galician Community (the main recipient of tourists in the Holy year), and those that are crossed by the Jacobean routes and branches, take advantage of the Holy year to promote their touristic destinations. And a great way to do so is through their tourism websites which, increasingly, serve as very effective communication tools: this is the reason that justifies our research object.

The eight communities that have signed the agreement with the Ministry, together with Catalonia, Valencia, Castile-La Mancha, Andalusia and Extremadura, constitute our objects of study. Since the routes that cross these thirteen communities are the historical ones, we let out of the analysis the recently added routes. However, we aim to analyse them in 2010 in order to determine whether other communities have taken this touristic opportunity and, if so, how have they presented the routes in their official tourism websites.

1.2. Institutional communication and advertising

As in the case of religious tourism, institutional communication and advertising are delicate terms to define, because their constituent elements are complex and intricate. Given the objective of this work, it is necessary to adopt a broad and inclusive view that considers the definitions and objectives of these activities.

Studies on institutional communication and advertising have addressed the public-interest character and use that this type of communication must possess, and its often diffuse social, political, corporative and commercial limits (Feliu, 2009). Of these limits, the commercial one has hardly been addressed, perhaps because it is part of the most remote and intrinsic meaning of advertising: to cause consumption and then accelerate it.

For Moragas (2005: 4), there is a clear difference between commercial campaigns, whose main purpose is to stimulate consumption and favour advertisers' commercial strategies, and the institutional campaigns, "whose objective is not the promotion of commercial goods or services, but the promotion of social values, the correction of behaviours, the protection of properties and people, and even "the promotion of the collective self-esteem". These

definitions can be interpreted as mutually exclusive: institutional communication is not commercial, and vice versa.

This difference is not acknowledged by the Spain's 1988 General Law on advertising (*Ley 34/1988*) or the Law on advertising and institutional communication (*Ley 29/2005*).

According to the first law, advertising is "any form of communication issued by a person or entity, private or public, in the exercise of a commercial, handcraft or professional activity, in order to promote either directly or indirectly the hiring of properties, services, rights and obligations".

For its part, the second law distinguishes between institutional advertising and communication: institutional advertising is defined as "any activity that is oriented and directed to the diffusion of a common message or goal, directed to a plurality of recipients, that uses a paid-for or assigned advertising platform, and is promoted or hired by one of the subjects listed in article 1" (the General State Administration and other public sector entities, listed in article 2.1 of the General Law on Budget (*Ley 47/2003*). This law defines an institutional communication campaign as one that "using means of communication that are different from those strictly used in advertising, and is hired by one of the subjects listed in article 1 in order to disseminate a common message or objective to a plurality of recipients".

According to this law, the difference between the two types of communication lies only in the selected communication forms, and has nothing to do with the objectives. However, this clarity is diluted with regards to the nature of the campaign, because while the same law states (in the 2nd paragraph of article 2) that "this shall not apply to industrial, commercial or commercial campaigns", article 3 (1.h) establishes that institutional campaigns may only be issued and hired in order to, among other objectives, "support the Spanish economic sectors abroad, promote the commercialization of Spanish products and attract foreign investment" and "to disseminate Spain's languages and historical heritage (paragraph I)".

Thus, it is important to wonder whether the campaigns of *Turespaña* (which include those for the Way of St. James and the Xacobeo 2010), which were included in the plans and reports prepared by the Committee on institutional advertising and communication, have a commercial character, and whether their aim is to "Support the Spanish economic sectors overseas". The answer is yes in both cases. So the next inevitable question is: Shouldn't they be left outside of the scope of the Law? Based on the grounds of their commercial nature, yes; but on the grounds of their aim, no.

Such inaccuracies are corroborated in the 2008 Institutional advertising and communications Plan, which recognises the need of "manifesting that this Plan corrects a mistake made in previous reports and plans, so that the campaigns of *Renfe Operadora* and *Turespaña*, which were considered institutional until now, are to be considered, given the nature of their objectives, commercial campaigns".

In addition to the complexity of what is meant by institutional advertising and communication, there is a lack of clarity about what is commercial at the institutional level. In our work, we believe that the advertising of touristic products and services is commercial (as opposed to corporate, political and social); but they become institutional when the issuer is the General Administration of the State or any government entities. Therefore, examining institutional websites means analysing the communication of a government entity that uses a medium of communication (and advertising) –Internet- to disseminate a message to a plurality of recipients.

1.3. Tourism websites

Both private companies and public bodies have different tools (radio, press, television, Internet, etc.) to reach their audiences. *Grosso modo*, the media can be classified into two broad groups; the personal media (telephone, mail, etc.), which are those dealing directly with the recipient of the message, but have a limited dissemination reach; and the mass media (like radio and television), which without achieving direct contact between sender and receiver increase the possibilities of dissemination of the message.

This traditional view of the media has been altered by the Internet, "the massive global network of interconnected packet-switched computer networks, which as a new marketing medium has the potential to radically change the way firms do business with their customers. The Internet operationalizes a model of distributed computing that facilitates interactive multimedia many-to-many communication" (Hoffman and Novak, 1995: 3).

One of the main key features of the Internet is that it exhibits features of both types of media: of the personal type, through the email, for example; and of the mass type, through the websites which are accessible to anyone (Larrondo, 2008: 6).

The successful development of the Internet has made its use necessary for public and private companies. Between 1998 and 2008, the number of Internet users in Spain (population of 14 or more years of age) went from 4.6% to 46.8%, and this percentage reached 50.5% in the last report (October-November, 2009) released by the AIMC (The Spanish Association for Media Research).

Regarding the services most searched by Internet users, in 2007 the search for information on goods and services reached 81%, and of those 64.2% were searching for travel and accommodation (CES, 2008: 50). On the other hand, the BBVA Foundation's study on the Internet in Spain indicated that in 2008 68.3% of users were interested in travel and tourism information (2008: 12). These data reveal the importance of the Internet for the tourism sector, as well as the desirability of its development and application among public agencies and private companies that are part of this sector.

In fact, the rise of the Internet has resulted in the enactment of laws to adapt the public institutions to deal with the new forms of communication imposed by the information technologies. With regards to the public realm in Spain, the Law of Legal Regime of Public Administrations and the Common Administrative Procedure (*Ley 30/1992*) stated, in its article 45 (Incorporation of technical means), that the government should promote "the use and application of techniques and media for electronic information and communication in the development of their activity and the exercise of their powers".

Recently the Law on citizens' online access to the public services (*Ley 11/2007)* aimed to develop and improve the relations between users and government through the adaptation to the new technologies. In its exposition of motives, the Law states that "A modern government must promote the use of electronic communications for the benefit of the citizens". The websites of the government entities are created then as part of the plan to offer citizens access to their information and services.

The website, which is a series of pages with a high volume of information on the same topic, product or destination, has the function of bringing together and organising such information in a simple and coherent way. The management of information is vital to achieve the intended objective, especially in the area of tourism, where information flows are continuous and intense. The success in production and sales highly depends on this management of information.

Hence, it is important to study the way the websites of the government bodies use the variety of online functions and applications to promote their touristic destinations and products, in order to reach out their target audience and achieve the objectives established in the promotion strategies (informative, communicative, economic, etc.).

Internet gives the tourism sector advantages in the communication process: the interactivity of the medium promotes and facilitates the communication between the different audiences; advantages for the target audience: the information is direct and active, users select the information they want; advantages in costs: it reduces dissemination costs, and the public voluntarily access the websites they want; advantages in the dissemination reach: Internet is a synonym of internationality (Sicilia and Pérez, 2000: 32). In short, the use of new technologies in tourism communication is essential to achieve the objectives established in promotion strategies, because they improve the management of the information between sender and receiver.

It is known that the strategic processes may not respond to occasional events and purposes, that they must result from actions and techniques that are well planned and sustained over time, that they involve all members of an organization (public or private), and that they need to use the most appropriate media to successfully achieve the goals (Hernández, 2002: 3).

The development of new technologies has led many people to consider the websites of organizations as communicative business cards and powerful tools of access for users. Thus, it is essential for public companies and organisations to reflect their image and activities in their websites. In short, websites are a communication tool that must be consistent with the institutional aims, must contribute to the transmission of information, and especially have to attract and persuade the consumers of digital media (Parra, 2008: 5).

On the occasion of the Holy year 2010, this work analyses the tourism websites of the Spanish autonomous communities that are crossed by historic Jacobean routes, and in particular the portrayal of the Way of St. James and its use as a touristic opportunity for energising their own tourist territories. Without a doubt, the complicated world of tourism communication must offer touristic destinations and products that are interesting and desirable for Internet users.

2. Methodology

The following activities were carried out in this research: 1) literature review to define the relevant concepts; 2) selection of variables to evaluate websites' quality; and 3) analysis of the tourism websites of the abovementioned communities. The analysis of the content and design of the tourism websites of the abovementioned autonomous communities, focused on determining whether these websites were taking advantage of the tools provided by the Internet for the touristic promotion of their territories and whether they have offered information on the Way of St. James and the Xacobeo 2010.

Table 1. Tourism websites

Autonomous communities	Official tourism websites
Andalusia	www.andalucia.org
Aragon	www.turismodearagon.com
Asturias	www.infoasturias.com
Cantabria	www.turismodecantabria.com
Castile and León, Spain	www.turismocastillayleon.com
Castile-La Mancha	www.turismocastillalamarcha.com
Catalonia	www.gencat.cat/turistex_nou/home_cast.htm
Valencian Community	www.comunitatvalenciana.com
Extremadura	www.turismoextremadura.com
Galicia	www.turgalicia.es
La Rioja	www.lariojaturismo.com
Navarra	www.turismonavarra.es
Basque Country	www.turismoa.euskadi.net

Source: Authors' own creation

Our initial hypothesis was that the institutional website of Galicia is the most complete in terms of information about the Jacobean holy year and the Way of St. James, and that the other autonomous communities crossed by the Jacobean routes did include information on the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James because this enhances the touristic attractions of their own territories. The main research objects were the home pages of the tourism websites that are listed in table 1. The study was carried out between January and March, 2010, and was based on the contents offered on the Spanish-language version of the websites.

The evaluation of quality is based on six purpose-created variables, which are a synthesis of the most relevant studies on the subject (Salvador and Angós, 1999; Sicilia and Pérez, 2007; González and Cordero, 2004; Crowder and Bailey, 2005; Tognazzini, 2003). Each parameter was ranked with 0 ("absence") or 1 ("presence"). The scale used to measure the variables of quality of the websites, ranged from five to three. Variables and parameters are as follows:

1. Content: it is essential that the information provided by institutional tourism websites is of interest to users (Salvador and Angós, 1999: 107). The quality of the content is measured according to how well it meets the needs of the website's visitor. The measurement parameters for this variable are:

    1.1. Identification of the author.
    1.2. Tourism information: After reviewing the tourism websites of the autonomous communities, we believe that the basic information they offer can be classified as:
    1.2.1. General information: information on the community in question. In some websites it appears as "General information" and in others, for example in the Andalusian website, as "Conoce Andalucía" ("Get to know Andalusia").
    1.2.2. Services: includes information related to hotels, transport, communication and restaurants.
    1.2.3. Commerce: information on commercial areas.
    1.2.4. Business: information on centres and venues for exhibitions, congresses, meetings, or conferences.
    1.2.5. Culture: museums, historical culture, world heritage sites, monuments, sites of interest, galleries, theatres, cinema, music and dance.
    1.2.6. Nature: protected natural sites, parks, routes of interest, excursions, hiking areas, rural tourism, maritime tourism, and adventure sports.
    1.2.7. Entertainment: shows, night clubs and pubs, theme parks, zoos, entertainment for children, elders, young people, and the whole family.
    1.3. Information provided on the homepage on accessibility and language.
    1.4. Correct grammar:
    1.4.1. Correct use of syntax.
    1.4.2. Correct spelling.
    1.5. Contact information.

2. The Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James. The inclusion of this specific variable is aimed to determine whether information on these events appear in the analysed websites, which is the main objective of our research. To do this, we first reviewed the home page; when such information was not visualised on the home page we searched the term "Xacobeo 2010", "Way of St. James" and "Xacobeo" within the website. When the website did not have the search option, we searched the information on these events in the website's map. The measurement parameters for this variable are:

2.1. Link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010 (www.xacobeo.es).
2.2. Contents related to the Way of St. James.
2.3. Information about the Xacobeo 2010.
2.4. Links to the Way of St. James.

3. Design. Another essential aspect of a tourism website is an organised and functional design to help users to find information and visualise the contents. The audiovisual content of the website should add value, and not just be a design element. The measurement parameters for this variable are:

3.1. Coherent structure of content.
3.2. Suitable images, sounds and audiovisual elements.
3.3. Perfect integration of links and featured content.

4. Links: updated, useful and clearly visible links are helpful to the user. The measurement parameters for this variable are:

4.1. Updated links.
4.2. Useful links.
4.3. Visible links.

5. Accessibility: "Accessibility is a subset of a more general pursuit: usability. Put simply, usability means designing a user interface that is effective, efficient, and satisfying" (Henry, 2002: 7); "websites and intranets must follow usability principles and make it easier for customers and employees with disabilities to perform their tasks" (Nielsen, 2001: 5). The measurement parameters for this variable are:

5.1. Accessibility features for disabled people
5.2. Accessibility in different languages
5.3. Usability: Efficiency and satisfaction when carrying out tasks

6. Navigation: This variable is measured using criteria such as the search option, the ease to navigate the site, download time, and the sitemap. The measurement parameters for this variable are:

6.1. Search option

6.2. Download time
6.3. Sitemap
6.4. Ease of navigation

Table 2. Maximum values that can be achieved by variables

Variables	Measurement parameters
1. Table of contents **Max: 5 points**	- Identification of the author - Information on tourism - Information on homepage on accessibility and available languages - Correct grammar - Contact information
2. Xacobeo 2010 and Way of St. James **Max: 4 points**	- Link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010 - Information about the Way of St. James - Information about the Xacobeo 2010 - Links to sites about the Xacobeo or the Way of St. James
3. Design **Max: 3 points**	- Coherent structure of contents - Suitable images, sounds and audiovisual elements. - Perfect integration of links and featured content
4. Links (links) **Max: 3 points**	- Updated - Useful - Visible
5. Accessibility **Max: 3 points**	- Accessibility features for disabled people - Accessibility in different languages - Usability: Efficiency and satisfaction when carrying out tasks
6. Navigation **Max: 4 points**	- Search option - Help - Sitemap - Ease of navigation

Source: Authors' own creation

The tourism websites can reach a maximum score of 22 points if they obtain 1 in all the parameters.

After the analysis was completed by the research group and the scores were established according to the previous criteria, the tourism websites of each autonomous community were classified into three groups:

    1) Ideal: more than 20 points.
    2) Acceptable: between 19 and 14 points.
    3) Improvable: less than 14 points.

3. Results

As table 3 shows, none of the analysed websites achieved the highest score (22 points), although four of them —Navarra, La Rioja, Basque Country, and Castile and León— reached 21 points. These websites achieved the same score in all the variables and all parameters of measurement, except in the "Xacobeo 2010 and Way of St. James" and "Link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010" variables. On other words, their home pages do not have a link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010, but do offer relevant information on the routes that exist within their territory, which means that they do take advantage of the holy year to promote their territories.

Table 3. Classification of institutional tourism websites

Groups	Tourism websites	Final score
IDEAL	Navarra	21
	Basque country	21
	La Rioja	21
	Castile and León	21
	Galicia	20
	Asturias	20
ACCEPTABLE	Aragon	19
	Valencia	18
	Catalonia	17
	Cantabria	15
	Andalusia	15
IMPROVABLE	Castile-La Mancha	13
	Extremadura	11

Source: Authors' own creation

The website of Navarre stands out above the others in terms of relevant content, design and functionality. This has been considered the ideal website to promote the touristic destinations of an autonomous community, since it implemented correctly the tools provided by the

Internet for this purpose; the structure of its content is very suitable for users because it achieves the informative purpose.

The tourism website of the Basque Country can be considered as ideal as that of Navarre, because it has abundant and precise information, its design is clear, clean and functional, and provides information on the Xacobeo 2010 through an image at the top of the page. However, it has been considered the second best website because we think that it should aimed for a less sober design and better visibility of the featured content and links of interest.

Like the previous two, the websites of La Rioja and Castile and León reached 21 points, which is very close to the score of the ideal website, according to the measurement parameters. Both lack a link to the official site of the Xacobeo 2010, but scored well in other variables, and take very good advantage of the tools provided by the Internet to promote tourism in their territories. They occupy the third and fourth places, respectively, because the buttons to return to the home page, their sitemaps and the contact section do not have enough visibility, and because, although they appear on the home page, their location and treatment is not appropriate. The contact option and access to the site map need to be more visible. Finally, their information is not as ordered and functional as it is in the website of Navarre.

Our research confirmed our hypothesis that the tourism website of Galicia would be the most complete in terms of information on the Jacobean holy year because it is in fact the most notorious and popular tourist event of the Galician community. In terms of the second variable, "Xacobeo 2010 and Way of St. James", the Galician website was the only one that achieved the maximum of 4 points. However, it only reached 20 points because it lacks accessibility features for disabled people.

The websites of Asturias and Galicia reached 20 points. They are both ideal websites because their content and design are fully consistent with their purpose. However, they fail in some parameters. The website of Asturias offers accessibility features for disabled people but does not provide information on the operation of these features; while the website of Galicia, as already mentioned, is not accessible for disabled people.

The group of "Acceptable" websites includes, in descending order, those of Aragon, Valencia, Catalonia, Cantabria and Andalusia. They are in this category because they failed in some of the variables considered in the analysis.

Aragon's website does not have complete information on the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James, which is surprising given that in this community (Somport) the Aragonese way starts to later join the Roncesvalles way, in Puente de la Reina, and finally start the oldest and most renowned route way of St. James: the French way. The downloading of audiovisual material in Aragon's website is slow, but its design and the segmentation of links according to touristic typologies are pleasant and functional.

The tourist website of the Valencian Community (18 points) has a good design and content, and uses Internet tools correctly in the promoting of tourism. However, it does not offer content on the Way of St. James, despite being the starting point of three routes: *Camino de Levante*, which starts in the city of Valencia, and the two Southern ways, with originate in Alicante.

Catalonia, with 17 points, has a tourist website that provides information on the so-called Catalan way, although it is very general and not very helpful for users. According to the criteria of quality, it has a correct design, its tourism information is basic, and its menu of content is complex. The website does not have a map to facilitate the visualisation of content. It has a wide range of languages, but does not have help for disabled people, which is negative.

Cantabria (15 points) offers complete tourist information, but the design of the website does not facilitate usability. The structure of content is a bit chaotic and does not have aids for persons with disabilities. Despite the historic Northern way crosses its territory, Cantabria's website offers scares information on the Way of St. James.

Andalusia is the last website in the "Acceptable" group (with 15 points). Its home page contains many images that facilitate the finding of contents. However, the site's design can be improved, because its start menu is automatically lost when the users accesses a part of the menu, and this breaks its structural function and complicates users' navigation.

The website of Andalusia lacks accessibility features for disabled people, but has a wider variety of languages, which includes Chinese and Japanese. It lacks information on the Way of St. James, even though Seville is the starting point of the historic *Vía de la Plata* route.

The tourism websites with the worst scores and classified as "improvable" were those of the autonomous communities of Castile-La Mancha and Extremadura. We can say that the website of Castile-La Mancha (13 points) is not functional because it lacks aids for people with disabilities; its design is not the most appropriate to highlight the most relevant content; and does not provide information about the Way of St. James, which crosses this region in the East.

In the last place is the tourism website of Extremadura, with 11 points. It has few links of interest and lacks a structured and functional design. It offers basic information, but in an unattractive way. It does not provide accessibility features for disabled people and it is only offered in Spanish (although it has inactive icons for other languages). Despite Extremadura is crossed by *Vía de la Plata*, its website does not include any information on the Way of St. James and the Xacobeo. Its design is deficient and its content scares. It has not taken advantage of Internet tools to showcase its touristic potential and the image of its community.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the websites' content and design, in the following table we offer recommendations for improvement:

Table 4. Recommendations for improvement

Tourism websites	Recommendations for improvement
Navarra	To include on the homepage a link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010. To add button to increase the default font size.
Basque Country	To use a most appealing design. To add button to increase the default font size.
La Rioja	To improve the location and the size of the contact and sitemap icons, to improve their visibility. To add button to increase the default font size.
Castile and León	To improve the location and the size of the contact and sitemap icons, to improve their visibility. To add button to increase the default font size.
Galicia	To include icon of accessibility for disabled users. To add button to increase the default font size.
Asturias	To activate the icon of accessibility for disabled users. To add button to increase the default font size.
Aragon	To reduce the downloading time of audiovisual media and to enrich the information on the Way of St. James. To add button to increase the default font size.
Valencia	To include information on the Way of St. James.
Catalonia	To include the option of accessibility and the sitemap. To add button to increase the default font size. To add information on the Way of St. James.
Cantabria	To improve the structure of content. To include the option of accessibility for disabled users. To offer more information on the Way of St. James. To add button to increase the default font size.
Andalusia	To improve design. To include the option of accessibility for disabled users. To include information on the Way of St. James. To add button to increase the default font size.
Castile-La Mancha	To improve the design, accessibility and visibility. To add button to increase the default font size. To include information on the Way of St. James.
Extremadura	To improve the design. To activate the languages. To include the option of accessibility for disabled users. To include links of interest, to improve the information on services, commerce, culture, nature and leisure. To include information on the Way of St. James. To add button to increase the default font size.

Source: Authors' own creation

It is necessary to stress that the tourism website of the Galician community is the most complete in terms of information on the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James, which fully confirms our initial hypothesis. The information on the Xacobeo 2010 and the Way of St. James in the websites of the autonomous communities that are crossed by the historic routes is uneven and varied, which only partially confirms the hypothesis that these communities would take advantage of the holy event and the way of St. James to promote themselves.

At the beginning of this work we defended the importance of a good management of websites to achieve the objectives of the promotion of the Way of St. James and the Xacobeo 2010. Now that the analysis has been completed, we conclude that the use of the tools and applications designed to facilitate greater and better development of the information is not completely efficient within the revised websites.

Instead, the analysis has showed that none of the websites of the autonomous communities managed to achieve the maximum score, because they did not meet completely all the parameters of quality in all the variables: content, Xacobeo 2010 and Way of St. James, design, links, accessibility and navigation. The analysis allows us to assert that, except for Galicia's website, there is a lack of promotion of events related to the Xacobeo 2010 in all of the websites.

The absence in the websites of a link to the official website of the Xacobeo 2010 can be seen as an opportunity of promotion for Galicia over the other communities. However, we think otherwise because the lack of information in the websites produces disenchantment in the users and potential tourist, who disappointedly leave the websites to find out what they need elsewhere, and conversely abundant information on the Xacobeo 2010 increases users' interest and may impact the community that provides the information.

This could be explain that four of the websites -those of Asturias, Cantabria, Galicia and Castile and León- use the Xacobeo 2010 logo to access the content on the Way of St. James. Regarding information on the Way of St. James, most websites included it: eight out of thirteen communities, which are those that possess the oldest historical routes (Northern Way and French Way) and have signed the agreement on online promotion with the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce.

The five communities that do not include information on the Way of St. James (Andalusia, Castile-La Mancha, Catalonia, Valencia, and Extremadura), and especially those whose traditional product has been in the sun and beach, are missing a very important opportunity to enrich their tourist offer. These communities should not only promote the Way of St. James during the current year, but permanently because that would enrich the interest on their own natural and cultural touristic attractions they are trying to promote, due to the decreasing interest in their sun and beaches.

Regarding the degree of quality of the tourism websites, the room for improvement is broad, since only 46.15% of the websites are ideal, while 38.46% are acceptable and 14.39% can be improved. These significant differences between the different websites reveal that their online strategies do not follow basic guidelines of information management, and that the autonomous communities should exploit their unique advantages over other communities, but do not do so. This is the case of Galicia which should have focused on the creation of an unbeatable tourism website on the occasion of the Xacobeo 2010.

Based on the tourist significance of the holy year in Spain, its long duration, and the dynamic and changing nature of the Internet, we believe it is relevant to continue examining the tourism websites of these autonomous communities, throughout 2010, in order to observe possible improvements and obtain, thus, more decisive conclusions.

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6. Notes

[1] Most studies on the use of websites by the Spanish autonomous communities is available in the proceedings of the conferences organised by Turitec (Tourism and information and communications technologies) at: http://www.turismo.uma.es/turitec/turitec/index.htm.

[2] C*odex Calixtinus* or *Liber Sancti Jacobi,* retrieved on 7 January, 2010, from
http://www.jacobeo.net/compartida/Codex_Calixtinus.pdf

[3] Santos (2002: 43-45) explains in details the various reasons for the reconversion of the Way of St. James in one of the main objects of the national and Galician tourism policies.

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