Zander Raul

Professor Barry

DCI 175: Innovations in Publishing

5/14/2019

Travel books and the Internet and Mobile Apps

Before the days of the majority of people carrying computers in their pocket, or having access to a computer in their household, people would turn to books for guidance on what to do or see when traveling. According to Pew Research Center, 77% of Americans own a smartphone and can access the internet at any given second (Pew Research Center 2018). The ability and ease in which people can access the internet and an infinite amount of data from blogs, apps, videos, and other sources on the internet have lead to the decline for the need of travel books.

The falling of the travel book and guidebook industry was not solely from the rise of the internet and the ability to access travel information online, but also highly attributed to the financial crisis of 2008. The demand for travel books and guidebooks fell from 2005 to 2011 as sales in the US were down 40% during that time (Dickinson 2018). The financial crisis lead to the general population being more frugal and taking less extravagant vacations which, in turn, led to fewer travel books being purchased. An indirect outcome of 1000s of people being laid off from the workforce from the financial crisis was people had time on their hands to travel or create their own job per say. Many people turned to self-publishing or creating apps and blogs about travel and their experiences around the world.

The top travel book companies such as Formers and Lonely Planet were both bought at major discounted prices just a half decade ago and the books now are sold in low quantities at a cheap selling price (Dickinson 2018). The reason being for this demise is because 81% of people in developed countries are internet users and can access travel information for free rather than pay for a physical travel book that has to be carried ((Dickinson 2018). The preference for high definition videos and images has led to more users utilizing the internet and apps over travel books which cannot be updated or have videos (Minardi 2019).

Apps such as Instagram and Pinterest have allowed for users to quickly visualize and be connected with travel ideas and platforms to actually travel (Minardi 2019). An estimated 50% of millennials used apps such as Instagram or Pinterest to aid in travel decisions and ideas (Minardi 2019).

Even though many signs point towards travel books and guide books going “extinct”, there are still desirable qualities of having a physical book. Some like to have “coffee table” books and some just have a preference for holding a book. Many travel books organizations have made innovations such as creating online issues or developing apps. Travel book giant National Geographic Travel has an online viewership of 30 million users. The travel book market has been vastly altered by the popularity of travel blogs, apps, and the internet, but guidebooks have adapted and are still desired to some extent.

Work Cited

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