



Press Release from Bournemouth University

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Further information:

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Tourism industry to benefit from pan-European e-service project

Tourists and hospitality organisations will benefit from improved online services thanks to the successful completion of a European-wide project led by Bournemouth University (BU).

The International Centre for Tourism & Hospitality Research (ICTHR), based within BU's School of Services Management, has successfully completed iSeT, a project co-funded by the European Commission to support the continent's tourism industry by improving online services.

Led by renowned e-tourism expert Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, the project involved the testing of an online tool designed to support Small and Medium Hospitality Organisations (SMHO) by providing telecommunication services identified as:

1. The "Before" service where the customer visits the SMHO and gets tourism information as well as reservation service.
2. The "During" service where the customer gets (through wi-fi connections) internet access and a virtual concierge service (information related to the local weather, transport etc.)
3. The "After" service where the customer gets selected customised information, special offers etc and loyalty management services.

The tool also provides an easy to use management system for employees that permits the administration of the all the above activities, and a portal for hotel owners dedicated to clustering and networking activities of local tourism organisations.

Following tests in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, insights and data from the project have been used to develop a Deployment Strategy and Business Plan to position the i-SeT tool-set in the European market.

Professor Dimitrios Buhalis explains: "Small hotels around the world are realising the power of the internet for their promotion and sales but also for the satisfaction of their clientele.

"This European project enabled us to do research with both small and medium tourism enterprises, tourism boards and other stakeholders and develop a powerful technological solution to support their operations, networking with other organisations and increase customer satisfaction."

He added: "We look forward to take the results forward in other regions and to support small business around the world to take advantage of the internet revolution."

iSeT is one of the eTEN projects run by the European Community Programme, designed to expand the availability and use of telecommunication networks (e-services) in the European Market.

. Notes to Editors:

1. For further information and to speak to Professor Dimitrios Buhalis please contact Charlotte Knight on tel:1202 961033, email: cknight@bournemouth.ac.uk
2. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to The Guardian University Guide 2009 & 2010. (www.guardian.co.uk/education)
3. In the 2008 [Research Assessment Exercise](#) (RAE) BU is the 4th most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*).

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