

# Mind the Culture Gap: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Tourism Destination Websites in Austria and the United Kingdom

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Master Thesis

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## Problem Statement

- the internet influences the travel decision-making-process (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005; Desantis, 2005)
- DMO websites = important marketing tools (Luna & Hyman, 2012)
- intangibility and perishability of tourism products
- information from DMO's is regarded more trustworthy than user-generated content (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjens, 2009)
- DMO website visitors vary depending on the destination but are both **domestic** and **international** tourists with different cultural backgrounds

DMO = Destination Marketing Organization



## Website-Visitors austria.info

Country	Percent of Visitors	Rank in Country
 Austria	17.0%	2,707
 Germany	11.7%	24,874
 Italy	7.1%	24,937
 Sweden	6.8%	6,467
 United States	6.3%	131,861

(Austria.info Traffic Statistics, n.d.)



## Problem Statement

- web design is often based on local culture (ethnocentric) (Luna, Peracchio & Juan, 2002)
- language options are not enough to cater for different cultures (Sun, 2001)
- culture influences web design:
  - visual design
  - navigation design
  - information design (Cyr, 2008)



## Research Objectives

- literature review
- development of criteria based on existing research
- analysis of cultural values on DMO websites in Austria and the United Kingdom
- comparison of the cultural values on websites and the perceived cultural values of the respective country



## Research Questions

- Which cultural values can be identified on Austrian and British tourism destination websites?
- Are the identified cultural values in line with the perceived cultural values of Austria/the United Kingdom?
- What are the most common cultural values that need to be considered when creating a tourism destination website in these countries?



## Cultural Frameworks

- Hall (1976)
  - High/Low Context
- Hofstede (1991)
  - Collectivism vs. Individualism
  - Uncertainty Avoidance
  - Short-Term Orientation vs. Long-Term Orientation
  - Power Distance
  - Masculinity vs. Femininity



## Methodology

- literature review
- content analysis of 16 websites
- analysis criteria based on existing research  
(Singh, Zhao & Hu, 2005; Moura, Gnoth & Deans 2014)
  - further development focused on the tourism industry and DMO 's





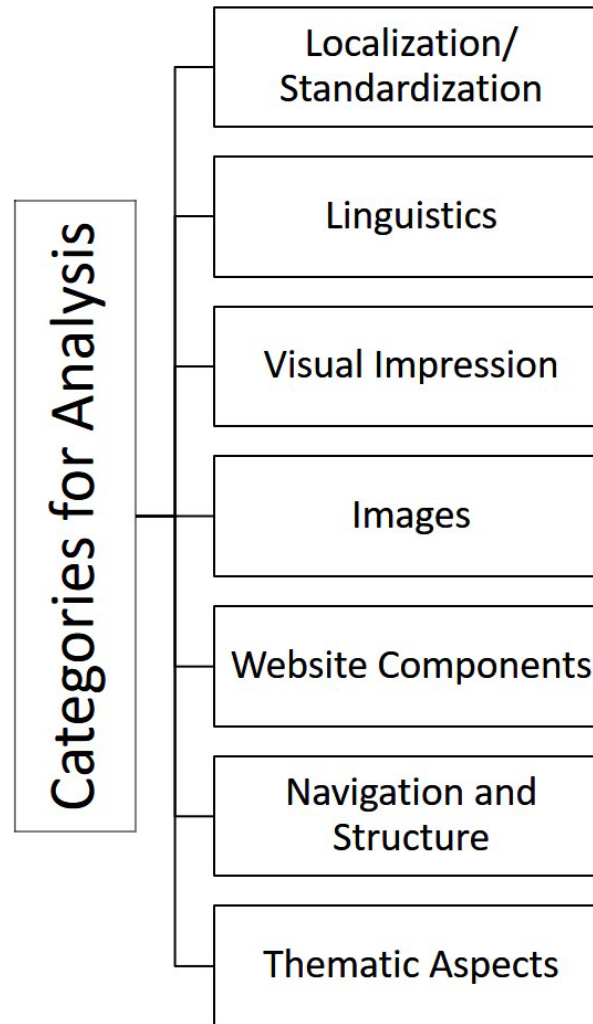
Sample

Level of Destination	Name of Destination	Country	Website
National	Austria	AT	<a href="https://www.austria.info/uk">https://www.austria.info/uk</a>
	United Kingdom	UK	<a href="https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en">https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en</a>
Provinces / Countries	Tirol	AT	<a href="https://www.tyrol.com/">https://www.tyrol.com/</a>
	Salzburg	AT	<a href="https://www.salzburgerland.com/en">https://www.salzburgerland.com/en</a>
	Steiermark	AT	<a href="https://www.steiermark.com/en">https://www.steiermark.com/en</a>
	Kärnten	AT	<a href="https://www.visitcarinthia.at/">https://www.visitcarinthia.at/</a>
	England	UK	<a href="https://www.visitengland.com/">https://www.visitengland.com/</a>
	Wales	UK	<a href="http://www.visitwales.com/">http://www.visitwales.com/</a>
	Scotland	UK	<a href="https://www.visitscotland.com/">https://www.visitscotland.com/</a>
	Northern Ireland	UK	<a href="https://discovernorthernireland.com/">https://discovernorthernireland.com/</a>
Cities	Vienna	AT	<a href="https://www.wien.info/en">https://www.wien.info/en</a>
	Innsbruck	AT	<a href="https://www.innsbruck.info/en">https://www.innsbruck.info/en</a>
	Salzburg	AT	<a href="https://www.salzburg.info/en">https://www.salzburg.info/en</a>
	London	UK	<a href="https://www.visitlondon.com/">https://www.visitlondon.com/</a>
	Edinburgh	UK	<a href="http://edinburgh.org/">http://edinburgh.org/</a>
	Manchester	UK	<a href="https://www.visitmanchester.com/">https://www.visitmanchester.com/</a>

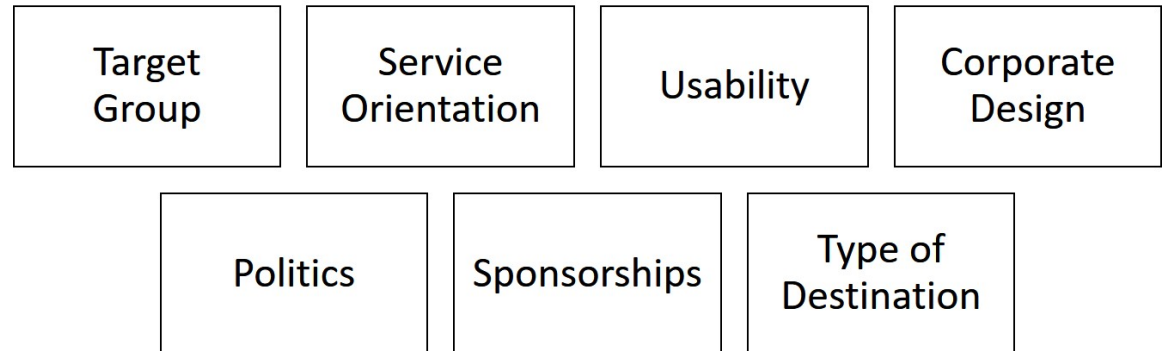
## Development of Criteria

Authors	Year	Title of the study
Gould, Zakaria, & Yusof	2000	Applying Culture to Website Design: A Comparison of Malaysian and US Websites
Marcus & Gould	2001	Cultural Dimensions and Global Web Design: What? So What? Now What?
Robbins & Stylianou	2002	A Study of Cultural Differences in Global Corporate Web Sites
Evans, Mcbride, Queen, Thayer, & Spyridakis	2004	Has the tone of online English become globalized?
Singh, Zhao, & Hu	2005	Cultural Adaptation on the Web: A Study of American Companies' Domestic and Chinese Websites
Würtz	2005	Intercultural Communication on Web sites: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Web sites from High-Context Cultures and Low-Context Cultures
Callahan	2005	Cultural Similarities and Differences in the Design of University Web sites
Tigre Moura, Gnoth, & Deans	2015	Localizing Cultural Values on Tourism Destination Websites: The Effects on Users' Willingness to Travel and Destination Image

## Categories for Analysis



## Contextual Factors





## Preliminary Findings

Language Options			
Salzburg	8	Northern Ireland	0
Innsbruck	9	Manchester	2
Kärnten	9	England	4
Tirol	9	Wales	6
Steiermark	10	Scotland	6
Salzburg	11	London	6
Vienna	13	Edinburgh	8
Austria	17	United Kingdom	14
Ø	11	Ø	6

Cultural Dimension	Contextual Factors
Uncertainty Avoidance	Service Orientation, Target Group

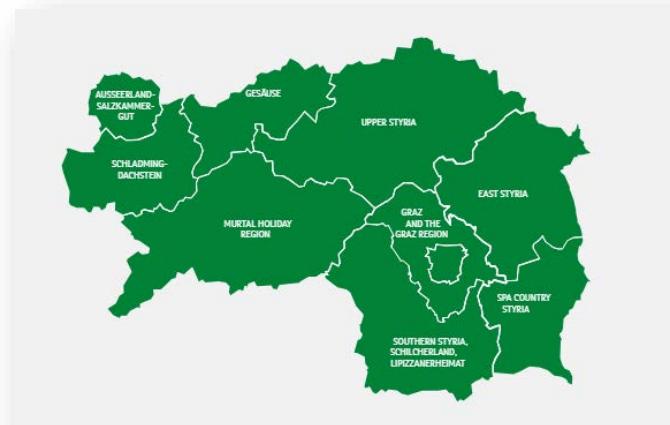


## Preliminary Findings

### Visualization of the Destination

Austria	8/8 100%	UK	4/8 50%
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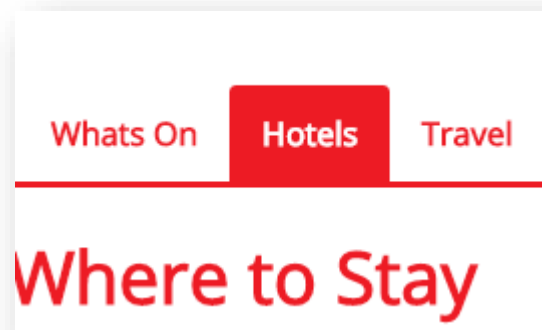
Cultural Dimension	Contextual Factors
Uncertainty Avoidance	n/a





## Preliminary Findings

Highlight Colour			
Austria		UK	
Red	5	Red	6
Green	2	Green	0
Blue	1	Blue	0
Purple	0	Purple	1
Pink	0	Pink	1





Preliminary Findings

FAQ 's			
Austria	1/8 12,5%	UK	1/8 12,5%

Cultural Dimension	Contextual Factors
Uncertainty Avoidance, Low Context	Service Orientation

**ABOUT**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS ABOUT  
SCOTLAND**





## Preliminary Findings

Loyalty Programme			
Austria	6/8 75%	UK	1/8 12,5%

Cultural Dimension	Contextual Factors
Collectivism, Long-term Orientation	n/a





## Preliminary Findings

Text-Based Navigation			
Austria	8/8 100%	UK	8/8 100%

Cultural Dimension	Contextual Factors
Low Context	n/a

Things To See & Do    What's On    Shopping    W

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Attractions ▼  
Free Things To Do | Family Friendly | Museums & Galleries |  
Parks & Gardens | Heritage & History | Sports |  
Stately Homes & Manors | Breweries & Distilleries |  
Group friendly attractions | Unique Experiences |

Activities ▼  
Walking Trails | Cycling | Food & Drink | Health & Spa |  
Adventure & Outdoor | Golf | Sport |

## Conclusion

- Austria and the UK share similarities
- cultural values are only to some extent present on DMO websites
- importance of contextual factors (target group, type of destination, ...)
- analysis criteria can be beneficial for intercultural web design

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## Literature

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