

# Wine web 2.0: digital communication and tourist netnography. Opportunities for new entrepreneurship<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

**Purpose of the paper:** *The paper aims to examine online communication of wine tourism destinations and their users in order to identify strategic approaches potentially suitable for the development of:*

1. *new web communication formats;*
2. *innovative entrepreneurial formulae that meet the expectations of increasingly demanding and expert customers.*

**Methodology:** *These aims are pursued by means of various methods:*

- *official wine tourism destination websites were investigated with the use of the text mining technique;*
- *wine tourists' online discussions were analysed with the use of text mining and the results were netnographically investigated.*

**Findings:** *The analysis enables the search for information, which aims to: a) identify the most frequently used keyword and thematic messages by official wine tourism destination websites; b) profile wine tourists who speak of wine tourism destinations under study.*

**Research limitation:** *The two main limitations of the study are: (i) the analysis has been conducted only on the wine destination websites, which are less interactive than social networks; and (ii) the netnographic approach used is of the observational kind and thus doesn't provide any interaction with wine tourists themselves.*

**Research and managerial implications:** *In managerial terms, the results of the analysis of user-generated content can be used to (re)direct communicational strategies and develop a more innovative and personalised tourist offer.*

**Originality/value of paper:** *The originality of the research lies in the application of research methods that enable interesting research hypotheses, although they are still infrequently used in tourism marketing studies.*

*Key words:* web wine tourism communication; netnography of wine tourists; wine web 2.0.

## 1. Introduction

Wine is apt to satisfy more complex needs than purely gastronomic ones (Crescimanno and Galati, 2014; Nosi, 2012) as it enables experiential

<sup>1</sup> While this paper is the result of reflections made jointly by the authors, in terms of final drawing up, paragraphs 1 and 2 are to be ascribed to Monica Fait, paragraph 3 to Paola Scorrano, paragraphs 4 and 5 to Federica Cavallo, and paragraph 6 to Lea Iaia.

circumstances thanks to its emotional, symbolic and hedonistic elements. In fact, these features compose its cognitive value - linked also to its area of origin (Costantinides and Fountain, 2008; Li and Bernhoff, 2008; Mattiacci *et al.*, 2006), which allows wine to become one of the most preferred cornerstones of online socialisation.

Consequently, wine tourism (Hall *et al.*, 2000) has similar features, as it is characterised by particular needs that often require customisation of the tourist offer. Indeed, in this context, special needs prevail; associated with knowledge of the area, culture, traditions and lifestyles, they extend the field of wine from its narrow sense (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000).

For the above-mentioned reasons, the role of web communication in this particular field seems to be significant but, at the same time, complex, as it requires targeted web marketing (Buhalis and Wagner, 2013). Indeed, for wine tourism destinations (Rosato and Scorrano, 2011; Franch, 2010; Hall and Mitchell, 2002; Telfer, 2001; Hall *et al.*, 2000; Peters, 1997), the ongoing digital revolution represents a big opportunity, as user-generated content (UGC - Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery, 2007) is highly valuable in developing customised, targeted communication which can provide a better *customer experience* and more incisive interaction (Sigala, 2012; Fuller *et al.*, 2008; Kujala, 2003).

This content, produced by 2.0 users, has become fundamental for the generation of new business activities, helping to plan and optimise marketing campaigns and identify models of behaviour and customer interests (Guttentag, 2010).

With the help of this information we can interact directly with consumers, making *data-driven marketing* (Kumar *et al.*, 2013) the basis of successful communication.

For these reasons, the paper aims to examine online communication developed by wine tourism destinations and their users in order to:

- firstly, identify the most frequently used keyword and thematic messages by official wine tourism destination websites;
- secondly, profile wine tourists who speak of wine tourism destinations under study.

The analysis enables the identification of strategic approaches potentially suitable for the development of new web communication formats and innovative entrepreneurial formulae that meet the expectations of increasingly demanding and expert customers.

## **2. The theoretical framework on the web communication and on the netnographic approach**

This paper, which is part of a broader research project, seeks to contextualise web communication studies in the specific sector of wine tourism, nowadays characterised by the increasingly operative role of web users. Indeed, the latter are increasingly important for communication strategies and the attempts made by enterprises and wine tourist destinations to enhance their visibility (Schimmenti *et al.*, 2014; Begalli *et al.*, 2009; Hernández *et al.*, 2009; Kim and Niehm, 2009). This entails

reflecting on the strategies chosen by firms which not only have to listen to and satisfy their customers, but also have to take into account their role in creating and disseminating content (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2012; Ozuem *et al.*, 2008; Ranganathan and Ganapathy, 2002). All this is particularly significant in the sector under consideration (Hall and Macionis, 1998), in which the visitor can be considered both in relation to the motivation (high-low) linked to the journey and to the “experiential” dimension of their relationship with the “wine” element (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). This aspect can generate high levels of fascination which may continue even after visiting the destination, in some cases thanks to the social dimension, which makes it possible to choose, appreciate and disseminate the destination (Huang and Hsu, 2010) and therefore the visitor’s own experience.

The pervasiveness of social media - particularly blogs, forums and/or communities (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008) - makes it possible to acquire important data about users (preferences, attitudes, expectations, personal data, etc.), including consumers’ evaluation of companies (Hays *et al.*, 2012; Fotis *et al.*, 2011; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010; Chiarvesio and Di Maria, 2009). Customer satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) is shared with others and with the companies themselves, sometimes producing a community in which not only the form of communication changes, but also its content and purpose, as it does not seek to convince, but rather to share and inform. Forms of integrated marketing communication are thus implemented (Naeem *et al.*, 2013; Oancea, 2011; Holm, 2006), in which the network formula of informational flow prevails and allows the coexistence of *one-to-many*, *one-to-one* and *many-to-many* procedures. In the Web 2.0 era (O’Reilly, 2005), characterised by the customer’s active involvement in the informational flow and his or her ability to create content, companies have to reconsider not only the instruments employed but also the type of communication chosen. It is also necessary for them to monitor UCG (Fait *et al.*, 2014) and the resulting online word-of-mouth communication (also considering its “buzz” dimension), and thus take part in consumers’ conversations, to avoid losing control of content. Considering communicative exchanges (Siano and Vollero, 2012) could help to direct the web communication process and could stimulate the creation of targeted groups (Kietzman *et al.*, 2011), ultimately redirecting business strategies.

In this perspective, new entrepreneurial formulae, based on the satisfaction of specific user needs that must be suitably studied and analysed, can be generated. Information can be used to (re)formulate innovative business models - in the case at hand, in the field of tourism services - based on the ability to rapidly modify the offer in response to information arising from the web. In order for this to be successful, it becomes necessary to identify the right sources of information to draw on. In this case, reference can be made to wine tourism destinations, which are the object of abundant UGC that individual companies sometimes cannot obtain. For this reason, when creating the present model of analysis we turned to the above-mentioned organisations (*wine tourism destinations*) and their exchange of messages with their variegated user community.

The age of Web 2.0 and the rise of virtual communities have confirmed internet as one of the most important tools for all actors in tourism. Today

the Web is the place where not only journeys are planned (booking means of transport, hotels, museums, etc.; Quinton and Harridge-March, 2010), but above all, where experiences, emotions and opinions are shared. It is a new space for social interaction that can provide useful ideas for honing the strategies of wine destinations, as well as conveying their message in a direct, immediate way.

In such contexts, customers are more active. Unlike traditional marketing, mainly characterised by one-way relations principally directed by the enterprise towards the market, consumers now create and disseminate their ideas and opinions directly on the Web, contributing to ongoing interactive dynamics involving a number of subjects (*many-to-many or multi-way*), based on networks rather than hierarchical interconnections. In general, in the age of Web 2.0, enterprises and customers are the nodes of countless networks, where market relations are in part determined by conversations among and with consumers. Thus, by implementing and using these social platforms, enterprises can pay attention to their customers, acquiring *feedback* and conducting an ongoing dialogue with users, helping them to innovate their relational approach and increase the potential for interaction and engagement (Howe and Strauss, 2007; Denegri-Knott *et al.*, 2006). In this sense, it is possible to talk about consumer-to-business or reverse marketing, due to the customer's participation in determining the product-offering or other elements of the marketing mix (Neuhofer *et al.*, 2013; Prebensen and Foss, 2011; Tapscott, 2009; Zwick *et al.*, 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), in a perspective of *digital prosumerism* (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010; Toffler, 1980).

It is thus particularly helpful to delineate the various types of web users on the basis of their conversations and the topics that are most frequently discussed by groups of internet users. To this end, netnographic analysis may be used as a support. (Kozinets, 2002).

Netnography is a branch of ethnography and cultural anthropology applied to the Web. The technique is based on content from online sources, encompassing both the topic under consideration and the subsequent interpretation of data (Wu *et al.*, 2013; Ismail, 2010; Xun and Reynolds, 2010; Puri, 2007; Dalli and Corciolani, 2007). As the textual content on the Web has grown (becoming more complex both in scientific-cultural terms and as a form of social interaction), in recent years there has been a sharp increase in studies and research - especially in the sociological field - based on netnography. The latter is defined as "ethnography adapted to the complexities of our contemporary, technologically mediated social world"; in other words a method that can make a key contribution to the comprehension of "life in the time of technologically mediated culture" (Kozinets, 2010).

The netnographic approach used in the present paper is based on the direct observation of a virtual community through analysis - without direct participation - of its conversations (De Valck *et al.*, 2009; Cova and Pace, 2007).

### 3. Research hypothesis and methods

Given this premise, the current paper proposes two main research hypotheses:

- $H_1$ : In order to achieve visibility on the web it is necessary for a website to convey information consistent with the users' expectations. In this sense, constant examination/monitoring of *consumer-generated content* is fundamental.
- $H_2$ : The topics around which wine tourists' discussions revolve can provide useful insight for management, helping to profile wine tourists and thus to formulate a personalised and effective communication strategy.

From such hypotheses derive the following research questions:

- $Q_1$ : *What web communication strategies are used by the main international wine tourist destinations and therefore by their most popular websites? In other words, what macro-topics are conveyed through wine destination websites?*
- $Q_2$ : *What are the main discussion topics on blogs, forums and communities? In other words, what information is most frequently requested by wine tourists and what do they mainly discuss?*

The research method is a mixed method, using different methods depending on the hypotheses and the questions it seeks to answer (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Plano and Badiee, 2010).

With reference to H1-Q1, a comparison (partly adopting the principles of benchmarking - Watson, 1995) of the main wine tourist destinations was conducted, held by wine tourists to be representative of excellence, as examined in previous researches (Scorrano *et al.*, 2013) based on the *top of mind* approach (Aaker, 1996); such wine destinations are thought to be: Napa Valley, California, Bordeaux, France, Tuscany and Italy.

In order to identify the related website with good placement on Google of each wine destination, the keywords "*wine tourism*" combined with the destination name (consultation: December 2013) were used; the website links available on the first page of the *Google.com* results were compared on the basis of the following standards:

- *Page Rank* provided by Alexa (<http://www.alexa.com>),
- Presence of at least one social profile on the main *social media* (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

After the individuation of the six websites (the first with a good *page rank* and a high relevant presence on social media, for each wine destination), the features of online communication concerning these wine destinations were examined. Consistent with the aims of the research, the analysis considered the communicative perspective (Maizza *et al.*, 2013; Scorrano, 2013; Lee and Kozar, 2012; Law *et al.*, 2010; Chiou *et al.*, 2010; Polillo, 2010 and 2006; Mich *et al.*, 2004); so, for each website, the following aspects were analysed by the authors (as also proposed by Crescimanno *et al.*, 2015; Begalli *et al.*, 2009; Cox and Dale, 2002):

- a. *Information Architecture*: the website's overall configuration (layout, colour, etc.) and relative modes of navigation. This phase sought to verify the page design and the simplicity of navigation between them (Polillo, 2006);

- b. *Visual Communication*: the content of the images and their consistency with the text;
- c. *Usability*: user-friendliness, i.e. the ease of retrieving the desired information completely and rapidly;
- d. *Social Media Dimension*: the capacity for integration with social media, fundamental for increasing engagement with current and potential customers.

A deepen analysis on website content was carried out by means of text mining (Koslowsky, 2010; Kin-Nam *et al.*, 2005) in order to identify the thematic messages and keywords most frequently used by the wine destinations under consideration. With regard to H2-Q2, as already mentioned, a search on *Google.com* (consultation: December 2013) was conducted using “wine tourism” combined with the destination name as keywords. In this analysis, the first three pages of results yielded by the “Discussion” search tool of *Google.com* were examined. In this way, it was possible to identify blogs, forums and communities in which wine tourists talk about the topic under consideration, discuss, exchange information and express opinions and/or decisions.

This (broad) content was then reprocessed in accordance with the text mining method (Koslowsky, 2010; Kin-Nam *et al.*, 2005), in order to highlight the most frequently recurring topics and the most sought-after information among *wine tourism* lovers, with two objectives:

- to highlight the themes which these users discuss most frequently, and to verify whether the data sought by users are also (easily) available on the related wine destinations’ business websites;
- to compare the results for each wine-destination in order to create a netnography (Kozinets, 2002) that delineates the characteristics and distinctive features of the various types of *wine tourist* in relation to the most frequently discussed topics.

#### **4. Text mining and wine tourism destination websites**

In order to identify the most frequently used keyword and thematic messages by official wine tourism destination websites (objective 1, referring to H1 and Q1), the analysis proceeded by stages, whose results are shown in the following paragraphs.

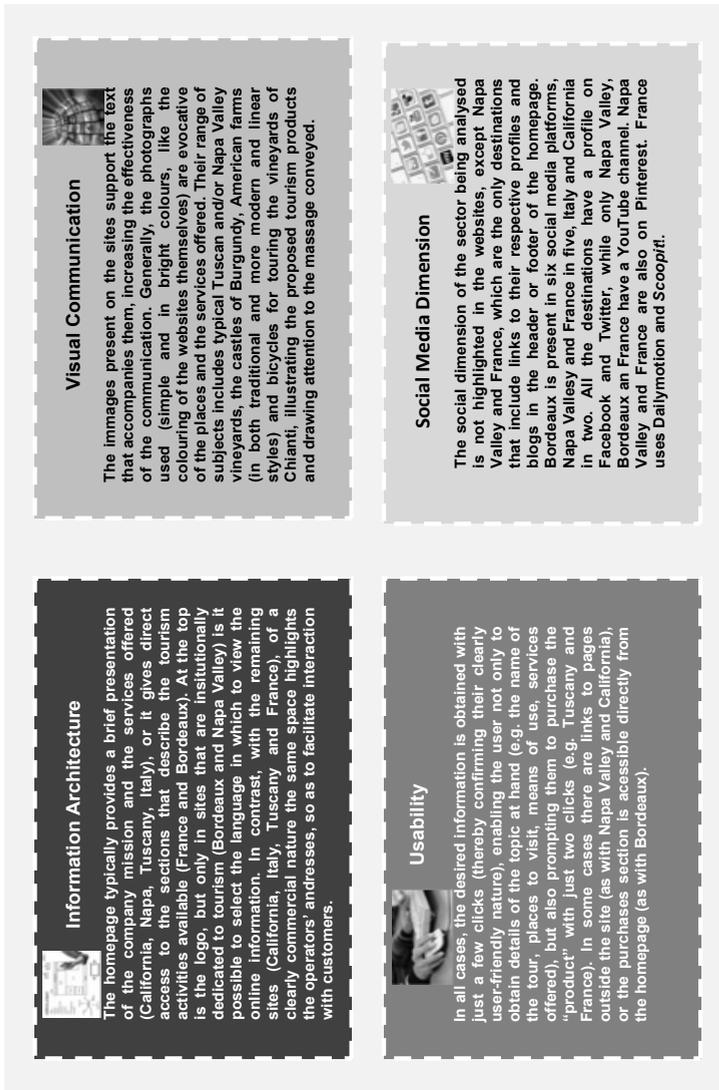
##### *4.1 Website investigation*

Applying the above-mentioned methods, the analysed websites were:

- *The Napa Valley* ([www.visitnapavalley.com](http://www.visitnapavalley.com)),
- *California Wine Tours* ([www.californiawinetours.com](http://www.californiawinetours.com)),
- *Office de Tourisme de Bordeaux* ([www.bordeaux-tourisme.com](http://www.bordeaux-tourisme.com)),
- *French Wine Explorers* (<http://wine-tours-france.com>),
- *Tuscan Wine Tours* ([www.tuscan-wine-tours.com](http://www.tuscan-wine-tours.com)),
- *Italian Wine Tours* (<http://www.italianwinetours.com>).

An initial analysis of the websites shows that in two cases out of six, they are run by the official authority designated for the promotion of local

Fig. 1: Summary of the analysis of wine destination websites



Source: our presentation

#### 4.2 Text mining and wine destination websites

T-Lab software was used to analyse the textual content of company websites in detail. The main *keywords* (980) used by wine travel destinations

were then identified, along with the semantic networks existing between them. This in turn made it possible to identify thematic *clusters* characterised by high homogeneity within them and high heterogeneity among them. As expected, the most frequently recurring terms concern the place names (Napa Valley, California, Bordeaux, France, Tuscany and Italy) and other areas associated with wine production (Sonoma, Chianti and Montalcino). For this reason, these lexical units were not included in the word cloud in Figure 2.

The central term, around which most of the textual content is structured, is “wine”, which is repeated no less than 1,761 times. In more than half of the cases, the term wine occurs more frequently than the name of the destination.

Fig. 2: Word cloud of the main keywords used by wine destinations



Source: our presentation

The semantic affinities between certain words make it possible to connect them to four main macro-themes:

- places of production and the people involved (*winery, vineyard, winemaker*);
- accommodation facilities and related services (*hotel, resort, chateau, castle, service, transfer, breakfast*);
- events and entertainment places (*wine tasting, tour, festival*);
- taste and well-being (*food, taste, lunch, dinner, relax, experience, luxury, spa*).

Albeit in different ways and to different degrees, these features are common to all wine destinations, and may therefore be considered fundamental to the dissemination of each area's distinctive characteristics.

Further in-depth analysis of these semantic networks was conducted using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), a technique that uses similarity matrices to represent the relationships between data within a reduced space.

In Figure 3, the diameter of the circles reflects the likelihood of each term's appearance (the greater the diameter, the more frequent the item); moreover:

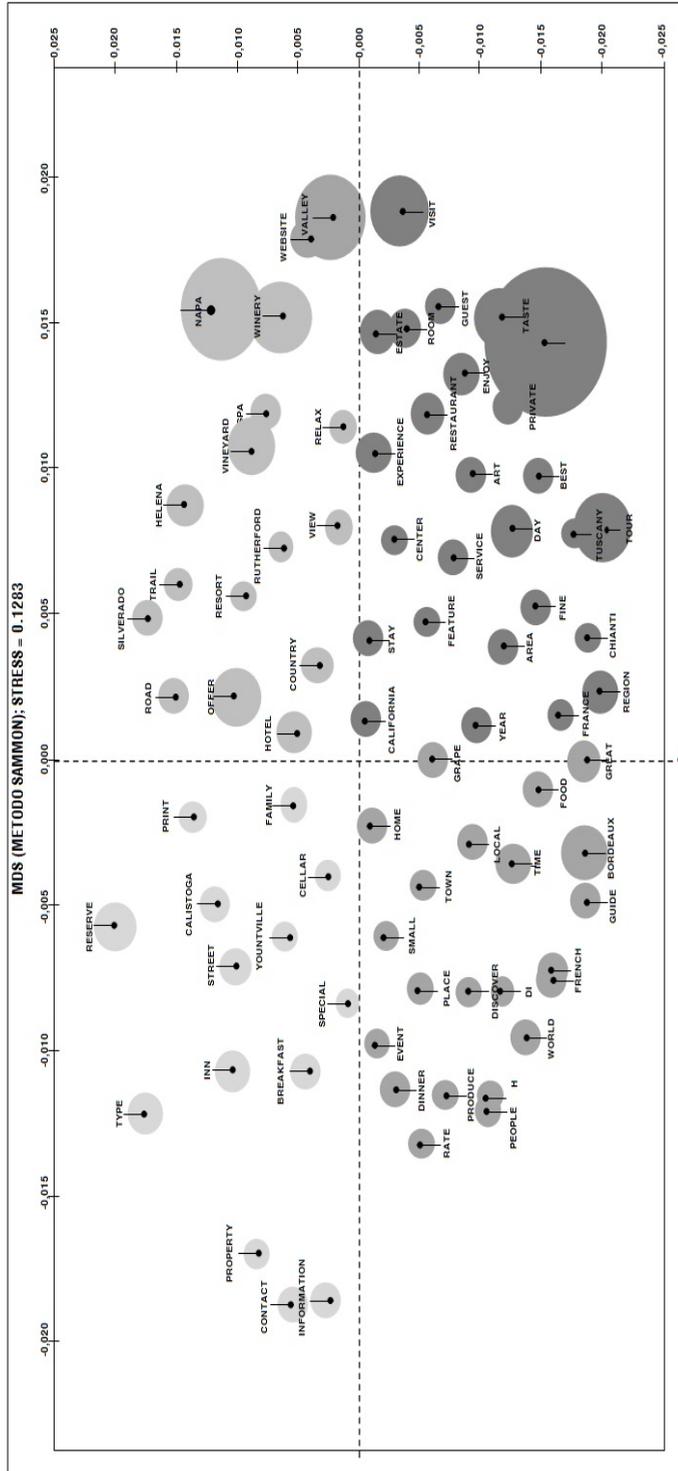
- the grayscale represents the thematic categories of the most frequently discussed subjects;
- the four thematic quadrants have stronger associative links within themselves, but there are relations among them too;
- the spatial orientation of the circles is not statistically significant.

In accordance with their internal homogeneity, the quadrants in Figure 3 were associated with the following four main thematic areas:

1. The *Wine Tour* quadrant encompasses words related to this type of tourism, from the 'stay' in the "rooms" of an accommodation facility to the "visit" to a wine cellar and/or 'restaurant', as well as the consequent "experience". Note the adjectives ("best", "fine") and verbs ("enjoy") qualifying such activities/services, by which the destinations (in this thematic nucleus, especially "Tuscany", "Chianti", "California", "France") seek to attract the greatest number of "guests";
2. The quadrant referring to the "Extra" services of a wine tourism destination is not limited to the visit to a "wine cellar" or the discovery of a "vineyard" in the area; it also includes the provision ("offer") of additional services: for this reason, "Napa Valley" emphasises "hotel", "resort" and "spa", in order to meet the visitor's potential need for "relaxation";
3. The *Food&Event* quadrant examines in depth every "local" aspect of the "world" of wine: there are frequent suggestions, especially on the "Bordeaux" website, of "places" and/or "events" at which you can "discover" the "typical" dishes and "wine" of the destination in question;
4. The *Booking* quadrant contains words related to "contacts" and useful "information" for hotel or "wine-cellar" bookings.

In order to assess the lexical specialisation of each wine destination with reference to precise thematic areas, the Analysis of Specificities technique was used. This makes it possible to verify which lexical units are typical of each subset into which a corpus has been subdivided, after defining a variable. This highlights the context units that are characteristic of a particular subset, and thus the 'typical' sentences that best exemplify the communicational messages of the different wine destinations under consideration (see Figure 4: *Analysis of the Specificities of wine destination website content*).

Fig. 3: Multidimensional Scaling Map (MDS – Sammon Method) of the textual content of wine destination websites



Source: our presentation

Fig. 4: Analysis of the Specificities of wine destination website content

<b>Office de Tourisme de Bordeaux</b>	The focus is usually on historic and artistic heritage, proposing visits to the "city", to discover the "monuments" and "vineyards" listed by Unesco, while providing useful information on "transport".
<b>French Wine Explorers</b>	This highlights France's "prestige" cities and "châteaux", as well as its wine "varieties", after which the tours are often named, usually accompanied by highly positive words ("fascinate", "deluxe", "favourite"), in order to prompt the tourist to "explore" the location.
<b>Tuscan Wine Tours</b>	This describes the areas of production of famous wines ("Chianti", "Montalcino"), highlighting landscape features such as "hills", providing a "map" and making suggestions for "lunch". Also important is the emphasis on the production of (olive) "oil", with the aim of introducing the public to this product.
<b>Italia Wine Tours</b>	This proposes various "areas" to visit, not limited to those that are closely linked to the world of wine ("Bolgheri", "Chianti"). It also emphasises the "coast" of certain areas, recommending the "sea", "fish" and "seafood".
<b>The Napa Valley</b>	This dedicates much attention to the area's "wineries" and "vineyards", providing precise information on "hotels" and "resorts" to stay in, as well as "bed & breakfast" accommodation.
<b>California Wine Tours</b>	After describing its cities of excellence such as "Sonoma", it provides detailed information useful for "travellers" and their "transfers", before discussing the various "airport" terminals, payment methods and services it offers.

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Source: our presentation of data

In addition to their own core products, each of these wine destinations finds in the local context elements of characterisation and specialisation with which to differentiate its activities from those conducted in the rest of the world, thereby making its own area unique and not like anywhere else (Anholt, 2007).

Such standardisation of communicational messages is the result of co-marketing measures implemented by the wine tourism destination together with other enterprises in the area in accordance with a synergistic approach. This serves to offer an integrated tourism product that stresses the area's distinctive assets (in terms of nature, art, culture, gastronomy, accommodation) and identity, making it both attractive and distinct from its competitors (Franch, 2010; Hall and Mitchell, 2002, Hall *et al.*, 2000, 1998). It is thus fundamental to consider the services that make the product easily usable, as well as the tourist attractors, that is to say the elements that improve the offer and increase the appeal of the destination (Naeem *et al.*, 2013; Kotler *et al.*, 2010; Holm, 2006).

For this reason, the communicative strategies of wine tourism destinations need to adopt a broad approach that treats the surrounding environment as an extra product and the customer as a co-producer of the service, not neglecting the multiple interactions among customers and between customers and the tourist system as a whole (Getz and Brown, 2006).

## 5. The results of the survey of online discussions

To profile the wine tourists who speak of wine tourism destinations under study, the textual content of the online discussions (objective 2, referring to H2 and Q2), identified using the above-mentioned approach, was analysed with the text mining method, processing:

- 7,894 elementary contexts;
- 19,592 forms;
- 16,291 terms;

making a total of 308,675 occurrences, considering a threshold of 6 (T-Lab).

This study used the “Discussion” search tool provided by Google.com, which returns only blogs, forums and communities in which the discussion is about the specified search terms, in this case the examined wine destinations. From each of the obtained results, considering only the first three pages, the text of the title or the given question was recorded, together with all the comments/replies, except for those related to groups created on Google (*www.groups.google.com*), whose registration to the community was required. In this way, it was possible to assemble and analyse the contents of 25 online platforms for each wine tourism destination, each of which provided an average of about twenty comments from wine tourism lovers. The total volume of text analysed by the T-Lab software amounted to about 1,000 pages in .doc format.

The initial analysis confirmed what had already been emphasised in the survey in H1. Indeed, the UGC revolves mainly around the word “wine”, of which there were 3,376 occurrences. The other most frequently used keywords are associated with the ‘experience’ (323) of wine tourism as travel in the narrow sense: “winery” (1,356), “tour” (1,203), “visit” (1,036), “taste” (815), “tourism” (489), “travel” (422), “vineyard” (371). Regarding the evaluation of the experience, the words most frequently used by wine tourists are: “great” (619), “love” (308), “enjoy” (273), “beautiful” (228), “fun” (155), “wonderful” (145), “easy” (139), “amaze” (121).

Although the discussions are linked by the same thread (interest in areas suitable for high-quality wine production), the macro online discussion among wine tourists can basically be linked to two types of “suggestion”:

- *expert*: linked to wine-cellar and vineyards to visit, to the wines and their characteristics, to tastings and the most important events in the area;
- *fun*: linked to complementary aspects of the places taken into consideration, highlighting the landscape, culture and history, as well as the gastronomic specialities, traditions and things to do during the holiday.

The names of the wine destinations analysed recur in the following order of frequency: “Italy” (684), “Napa” (521), “France” (353), “Tuscany” (336), “Bordeaux” (333) and “California” (192). From these numerical values two considerations arise:

- the first two destinations are those that generate the most content, thus obtaining a high number of posts;
- discussions and exchange of information about these wine destinations occur not only when the post directly concerns the destination. For example, an opinion and/or a suggestion related to Tuscany is often extended and enriched with information regarding the whole country, i.e. Italy. Moreover, Italy appears in discussions concerning France, very often in order to make a comparison, highlighting their distinctive features or similarities.

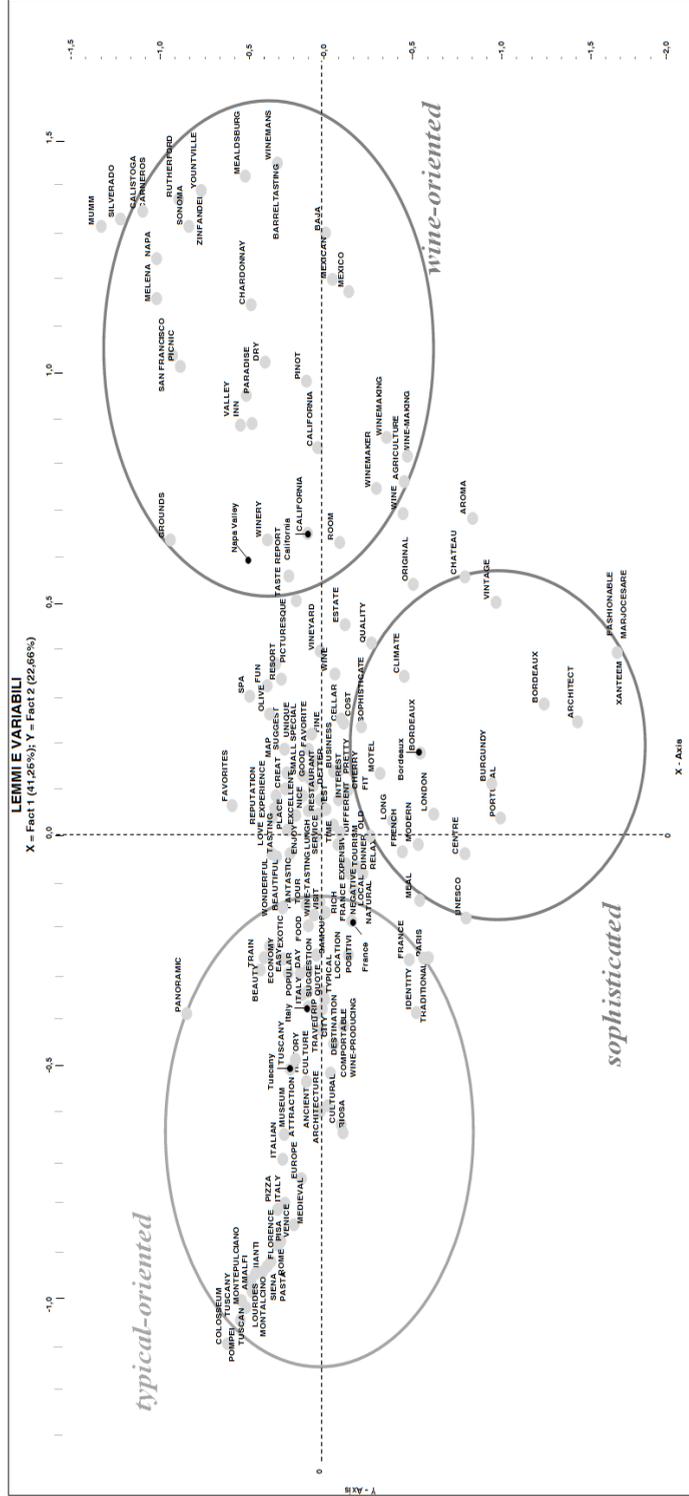
This is also confirmed by the Analysis of Correspondences (see Figure 5), which makes it possible to represent the data in a reduced space, thus illustrating the polarisation of variables on a Cartesian chart.

This technique made it possible to summarise the information taken from blogs, forums and communities in a bi-dimensional space. The relations between the context units in terms of proximity and distance (similarity and difference) were analysed in order to identify the behaviour of the different wine tourists in relation to the destinations under consideration.

This graphic representation makes it possible to classify, in accordance with the netnographic approach, three main types of wine tourist (the names given to the different groups come from the interests noticed in the discussions):

- *sophisticated*: i.e. those who favour the “fashionable” aspect of a location, who exchange views on the best “chateau” to visit or the best “vintage” offered by “wineries” during tastings. Many suggestions concern not only the technical characteristics of local productions, but also the price, and are frequently characterised by a high degree of precision (“*A red Bordeaux wine needs at least 10 years to mature. A young red Bordeaux, even when it comes from a grand chateau, is just bland and full of tannins. The complex fruit and mineral aromas need time to develop*”; “*More recent vintages range in price from \$29 a bottle for the 2002 all the way up to \$83 for the 1999*”). The most frequent words are in significant semantic proximity to the content related to the Bordeaux variable;
- *wine-oriented*: wine tourists who mostly discuss Napa Valley and California. Information on these two wine destinations is linked to the world of wine itself. They often discuss people involved in the production chain and they talk about the best wines (very often emphasised with superlative adjectives), wine-cellars, vineyards to visit and the importance of aspects linked to cultivation and production during their tours (“*Always a better experience doing the small production wineries, IMO. Meeting the owners and winemakers is so special!*”; “*The Syrah is slap-your-mama fantastic, and I could bathe in the Zinfandel and Cabernet. Even the Chardonnay is superb. None of Chris’ wines overpower you with alcohol, yet they’re all big, robust wines, including the white. You can actually taste the grapes, the soil, the rocks, the wine. You HAVE to stop in here and buy a bottle or two. He’ll take you out amongst the grapes for an agriculture lesson if you ask him to. He’s always great about educating his customers. We’re headed out there for Memorial Day week, and I can’t wait. Can you tell I’m a big fan?*”; “*The wines were quite good, and we really got a good education in wine country agriculture and wine making*”);

Fig. 5: Analysis of Correspondences in the textual content of blogs, forums and communities (circles show wine tourist netnography)



Source: our presentation of data

- *tradition-oriented*: these tend to be wine tourists talking about Italy, Tuscany and France. On the Web they analyse the cultural and architectural aspects of these places, emphasising their history and traditions, as well as the “food” and characteristic local products. Discussing their tours, they give detailed suggestions on things to do, monuments to visit, how to buy tickets for museums and how to reach the most interesting towns (“*You’ll have a wonderful time discovering the area you stay in - shopping for local products, eating good food, drinking good wine (it is hard to eat badly in Tuscany, most “trattoria” have extensive wine lists just like the restaurants do) and most of all taking part of your nephew’s wedding in such a beautiful context as Tuscany!!*”).

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Besides the observed clusters, there are also terms located around the centroid of the bi-dimensional space that have proximity relations, from the lexical point of view, with all the wine tourism destinations under consideration. These words reveal positive sentiments among the wine tourists: as can be seen from the graph (see Fig. 5), the tour experience in the wine destination under consideration is usually identified by lexical units such as “good”, “favorite”, “enjoy”, “excellent”, “great”, “nice”, “beautiful”, “wonderful”, “interest” and “pretty”.

Lastly, it is useful to consider the presence, albeit limited (only three occurrences), of negative adjectives. Lexical units such as “negative”, “not good” and “expensive” do not qualify the products and/or areas linked to the wine destinations under consideration, but are usually linked to the purchase of extra services (water taxis, meals, gifts): “*From the cruise port you can choose three different means of water transport; most expensive is a private water taxi*”, “*My favourite place in Italy is the island of Capri, but boy is it ever expensive! Me and my partner paid £30.00 for burger and chips each and one small beer each, and that was back in 2007!*”.

## 6. Conclusions

The present paper originated from two research hypotheses (and related questions):

$H_1$ : In order to achieve visibility on the web, it is necessary for a website to convey information consistent with the users’ expectations. In this sense, constant examination/monitoring of *consumer-generated content* is fundamental.

$H_2$ : The topics around which wine tourists’ discussions revolve can provide useful suggestions for web marketing, helping to profile wine tourists and thus to formulate a personalised and effective communication strategy. This can also lead to the birth of new companies or new services calibrated to the specific needs of different users.

Via the formulation of answers to the research questions, the analysis thus conducted made it possible to confirm the initial hypotheses and emphasise the need for greater dynamism on the part of enterprises in order to preserve and/or improve their competitive edge. Indeed, monitoring online conversations is a way for wine destinations to obtain customer feedback, gain knowledge of their tourist experience and enrich the content

of the offered products. It was thus possible to outline the characteristics of the “new wine tourist”, who is well-informed, chooses the destination in accordance with his interests and plans his free time, at the same time becoming a ‘spokesperson’ for his own travel experiences who provides useful suggestions to the other members of the community.

The scientific contribution of this research is represented by the application of the text mining analysis and netnographic approach in the wine sector, in which they are not often utilised. Therefore, the analysis model designed is thought to be potentially adoptable in any sector; indeed it enables the identification of the most frequently thematic messages in the corporate websites under study and profile users of the Network.

In this sense, the research conducted can have managerial consequences in terms of delineating an integrated tourist offer on the basis of the insight gained by analysing ‘virtual discussion rooms’ that reference the enterprise. These communicative platforms offer significant informational opportunities that are useful for planning a personalised, attractive offer for the customer. However, they also allow enterprises to become acquainted with the perceptions of users and thus the brand image that is generated by rapid word-of-mouth online communication. To this may be added the potential utility of the study in terms of creating a model of analysis that can be used for creating new offer formats for services that are closely linked to the specific needs of a demand that is constantly evolving. Indeed, the netnographic approach, with the profiling of UGC, makes it possible to conceive specific offer formulae that can predict, intercept and hopefully satisfy the various expectations, which are hard to identify with other types of analysis. This approach thus serves two purposes:

- a) to direct web communication;
- b) to define new types of offer linked to the specific needs of the demand.

The limits of the present study are of two kinds: from the communicative point of view, the analysis was based only on wine destination websites, which by definition are less interactive than the latest generation of social networks. The netnographic approach used is of the observational kind and thus provides no interaction with wine tourists.

In terms of the development of the research, the aim is therefore to complete the results by broadening the analysis to include the content adopted by wine destinations on the most frequently used social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.). This research will take account of the fact that destinations using social networks need to continuously update their content, use a generally more informal/immediate tone than the one used on their institutional sites and deploy effective content that can generate engagement and strengthen the destination’s brand image.

It will also be interesting to further develop the netnographic analysis, possibly increasing the study sample, favouring a participative approach by means of questionnaires to be compiled by wine tourists in order to investigate their perceptions of the wine destinations observed.

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