Methodological proposal for the analysis of the 'online reputation' of protected areas

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In today's world, social media is an important and necessary tool for the delivery of accurate information. Social media makes it possible and easy for users to express opinions about the experiences and service offered. With the development of social media, recreation and tourism users can also better express their opinions much more critically. Social media, a management tool, has resulted in users being able to express positive or negative feelings about their experiences. In addition, this tool enables the service provider to improve their facilities and services, and ultimately the recreation/tourism experience. One example of this is the website called TripAdvisor, which provides consumer ratings for hotels, attractions, agencies and restaurants. TripAdvisor includes recreation/tourism attractions such as protected areas, parks, museums, historic buildings and so on. A drawback of these types of sites is that anyone can list any comment—and analyzing the data is not an easy task. This proposed poster focuses on a methodology of assessing comments regarding outdoor recreation settings such as parks and protected areas, as well as the facilities, services and information they provide. This method relies on a spreadsheet with categories and keywords to parse out and categorize comments about satisfaction, crowding, and so forth.

With the advances in social media over the past 10 years or so, the internet has become one of the primary source of information for those seeking information about recreation and tourism. Websites like TripAdvisor have become benchmarks for opinion analysis. Bizinelli et al (2013) suggest that, within contemporary society, technology now provides people with an active voice, which expands the horizons of communication, and creates new ways of expressing thoughts in an interactive way. According to Limberger, Boaria and Anjos (2014), social media has changed the way tourists seek and exchange information. This user-generated content allows this information to reach other tourists, influencing the decision of new visitors. Silva and Gandara (2016) created an online reputation assessment methodology, which we will demonstrate. When adapted, this analysis can also be used to fully understand visitor management comments on protected areas.

The proposed analysis: categories and aspects related to protected areas

In order to analyze the online reputation of protected areas on the TripAdvisor website, and to identify visitor's opinions regarding satisfaction, quality and experience, categories of analysis have been defined. Three main categories are suggested: Landscape, Services and Activities. These categories encompass key aspects of analysis, with the use of keywords (Table 1).

Category	Aspects	Positive	Negative	Keywords
	Scenic beauty			stunning, wonderful, incredible scenery, etc.
LANDSCA	Well preserved			preserved nature, forest presence,

PE	nature conservation,			pristine
	Presence of animals			sightings, contact with fauna
	Landmarks in the landscape			geomorphological and hydrographic elements (mountains, plateaus, rivers, etc.)
	Location			untouched place, far, near
	People			full, empty, crowding
	Surroundings			region, people of the region, community
SERVICES	Buildings			concierge, visitor center
	Cleanliness			dirty, garbage, trash, clean area
	Access			good, bad, easy, difficult
	Facilities			parking, wifi, free transport
	Interpretation			panels, video, brochures, lectures, leaflets
	Information			behavior, attractiveness of the region
	Guiding Services			service of guides, monitors, etc...
	Food			restaurants, snack bars, snacks, food quality
	Prices			free, price paid, expensive, cheap.
	Time			timetables for activities, opening and closing time.
	Shopping (souvenirs)			items for purchase, lack of items to buy, product highlights
	Safety			emergencies, risks, accidents, security, etc.
ACTIVITIES	Activities			trails, baths, experiences, specific activities in the AP
	Tourist attraction			landmark, little visited, all must know, unique.

Table 1: Protected Area Categories of Analysis

To test the methodology, analyzes of Brazilian protected areas were carried out, including the Tapajós National Forest, Anavilhanas National Park (both in the Amazon) and Iguaçu National Park. In Anavilhanas, for example, 33 comments were analyzed, 66% positively highlighted the scenic beauty of the place. And in relation to the negative aspects, 3% of the analyzed comments criticized the guides who carry out activities in the National Park (Teixeira et al, 2017). Results showed that sites such as TripAdvisor provide visitors with the opportunity to comment, which can be a good and inexpensive method of evaluation. Tools such as the table presented facilitate the analysis of these comments and may contribute to Public Use management and satisfaction monitoring. These results will be discussed in detail through the case studies in the settings discussed above.

References

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