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*Different Cultures, Different Websites:
An Analysis of Cultural Communication
and Hypertext Usability Evaluating
Tourist WWW Pages on Kenya*

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1 Introduction

“Homepages are the most valuable real estate in the world. Millions of dollars are funneled through a space that's not even a square foot in size.” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 1)

The Internet, whose origin already goes back to the 60s, has been brought to a wide audience only at the beginning of the 90s by the introduction of the World Wide Web resulting in its user-friendly application. Since then, the progress of the Internet and the WWW has been unstoppable. Having become part of everyday life, computer and Internet are preferably used as tools to find and obtain information on almost everything. As Nielsen (1990: 73) points out, “tourist information achieves a good match with the 'golden rules' of hypertext, since tourists typically want to read only a small part of the information available about a given city or country.”

In the last years, the number of tourism websites has considerably grown. Users appreciate the many advantages of searching the WWW for particular information on a travel destination. Since the aim of every website is to communicate, this modern form of communication opens the door to information transmission and even cultural communication. Tourist websites are not only a means to list facts and practical hints about a city or country for prospective tourists, but even a means to purchase a product, in this case the given destination. Most of you certainly consider Kenya as a country with an exotic, alien culture, very distinct from the European culture. Keeping in mind that prospective tourists may be unfamiliar with the Kenyan culture, the question of how culture is communicated through hypertext application on tourist guides is to be answered. Nowadays, companies spend a huge amount of money on websites globally available. As people spend more and more time on surfing the Internet, website providers pay much attention to usability.

In this MA thesis, 30 tourist websites about Kenya will be examined. The focus will be on their usability for prospective tourists as well as their method of communicating Kenyan culture to visitors. The thesis is divided into two main parts. Starting from the theoretical background of central terms such as *culture*, *cultural semiotics*, *hypertext*, and *websites*, an evaluation of selected tourist guides on Kenya will be presented.

In part I, technical literature concerning that subject will be analysed and definitions of the central terms will be established with regard to their specific application on websites and cultural communication. This chapter will also determine evaluation criteria for websites in order to apply them on tourist guides on Kenya. As the communication of cultural aspects will be an essential part in this paper, a definition of a *cultural tourist* as target group will be given here.

Part II is based on the application of my theoretical observations on 30 examples of tourism websites on Kenya. Having divided these 30 websites into three groups with reference to their particular homepage, this chapter will present a more or less detailed evaluation of one homepage of each group. Within these detailed analyses, the hypertext's suitability on tourist guides and the way of communicating Kenyan culture will be explored. Part II will then also attempt to establish usability statistics aimed at finding out which design dominates the selected tourist websites.

This MA thesis does not aim at electing one of the selected tourist websites as the best online tourist guide, but rather at working out individual strengths and weaknesses of such websites. Furthermore, it focuses on the investigation how Kenyan culture can be communicated to cultural tourists making them familiar with different cultural habits and customs. The study of cultural semiotics shall be applied on that particular form of text.

2 Theoretical Background

The number of people who prefer using the Internet for searching for particular information has, indeed, increased in the last years and is more and more increasing. Considering tourists as specific internet users, it is necessary to have a closer look at a particular type of websites, that is tourism websites. In order to analyse website usability and communication of culture via tourism websites for this specific type of users, terminological definitions of *culture*, *text*, *hypertext*, and *website* are required. Furthermore, a comparison of *text* with *hypertext* shall help to work out advantages and disadvantages of online tourist guides. Not only the tourism website as a particular type but also its target group will play an important role in this analysis. All these theoretical observations shall form the basis for the establishment of criteria for a following evaluation of tourism websites.

2.1 The Concept of Culture

Most people would certainly accept the proposition that tourist guides must to a certain degree satisfy the tourists' demand for familiarising themselves with the “other” culture. One should keep clearly in mind that *culture* is an essential aspect within tourist guides because one culture speaks about a different culture, here the Kenyan culture, via a cultural and linguistic border. But what does the term *culture* refer to? The following chapter will attempt to explore the idea of *culture*. It has to be emphasised that the concept of *culture* cannot be grasped in its totality. A large number of authors have already dealt with this phenomenon.

As it is not very helpful, within the scope of this paper, to examine the idea of *culture* with its whole anthropological development and its various complex definitions in detail, this chapter will only introduce the complicated issue in order to offer a definition being applicable to the investigation of tourism websites.

How do we define *culture*? What do we mean by speaking of *culture*? The Oxford English Dictionary (2000) defines *culture*, among other things, as “the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group”, as “a

country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc.”, as well as, generally spoken, “art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group”. This definition reveals the range of the term and brings out the diversity of the understanding of *culture*. Certainly, most people agree with the common definitions mentioned above. *Culture* can refer to everyday culture, including customs, traditions, beliefs, the people's way of life, but also to advanced civilisation comprising arts, music and literature. All in all, the term *culture* can always be connected with heritage, certain customs, beliefs, and traditions which mark the way of life of a certain cultural group. Johansen and Larsen (2002: 150) strongly connect *culture* with nature by identifying it with environment, that is the physical surrounding. Of course, nature occupies different positions in different cultures.

Culture could develop due to the existence of nature, or rather, due to different environments. Johansen and Larsen (2002: 197) point out that “culture is formed along the borders of what we perceive to be nature.” Assuming that different environments, i.e. natural borders, have been determining for the development of cultures, it becomes obvious that there are notable differences between all cultures. Even language shapes culture because a country or a group defines itself by its particular language, too. With the example of Kenya, one realises that not only natural or geographical borders separate that country from ours but also communicational borders, and thus, cultural borders.

2.2 Cultural Semiotics

In order to analyse cultural phenomena with the help of semiotics, one has to deal with conventions, rules that most people in a society expect and consider to be the right way, that are manifested within the culture, and that can also be changed by people of that culture. But then the entire culture for any given group with its codes, or conventions, changes as well over time. As the science of *cultural semiotics* is relatively young, it makes sense to have an initial look at *semiotics* or *semiology*.¹ This science is, generally and briefly spoken, the study of signs and signification. The field of *semiotics* is too complex to include all levels of verbal and visual investigation in this paper.

¹ In the following sections, I consider both terms, *semiotics* and *semiology*, synonymously, even if some scholars may differentiate between both linguistic terms.

Furthermore, *semiotics* itself does not play a major role here, but rather an introducing role, since only its application on other fields of studies will be of interest.

As Marion G. Müller (2003) summarises in her book, the theory of signs and sign systems has not been accomplished until the very beginning of the 20th century. The works of Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure have contributed to this development. The main thesis of *semiotics* concerns the relation between signs referring to objects which are interpreted by the interpreter. However, the field of *semiotics* does not only investigate linguistic signs but also everything that refers to an object in every conceivable way. *Semiotics* considers a broader sense of the idea sign, language and other means of expression. The object only needs an interpreter. That means that even visual objects are included by the study of signs. (cf. Müller 2003: 158-60)

Peter Stockinger (2001: 8) defines *semiotics* as “[...] a set of theories and methodologies for

- the description of information-loaded objects, called signs,
- their use by any kind of cognitive agents (individuals, institutions, artificial agents, ...)
- as well as their history (their evolution).”

Stockinger (ibid.) speaks here of three major groups of information-loaded objects. First, he understands information-loaded objects as “[...] documents, such as texts, pictures, graphics, audio-visual material”. Therefore, signs are objects carrying information which are interpreted by cognitive agents. Second, “[...] 'structured objects': databases, SGML² or XML³ compliant files and specific computer programmes such as information agents” are also considered to be a kind of such objects. Finally, the third group includes “[...] also social activities and interactions (professional activities, daily life behaviour,...) that manifest themselves in a more or less stereotyped way.” (Stockinger 2001: 8)

Semiotics differs from linguistics in that it broadens the definition of a sign by covering signs in any medium, as we have just seen with Stockinger. Having developed in different disciplines, *semiotics* also finds application on cultural studies, where visual communication often plays an outstanding role. Despite the relative young existence of

² Standard Generalized Markup Language

³ Extensible Markup Language, a simplified subset of SGML

this field in linguistics and cultural studies, it is nevertheless too large to cover here all contributions and theories by diverse scholars. I will only mention briefly the aspect of *cultural semiotics* that is decisive for further proceedings in this paper. I refer here again to Johansen and Larsen (2002: 204) who suggest that “[...] cultural semiotics investigates the cultural process, its presuppositions and the structure of the cultural universe, taking the symbolic processes as its point of departure.” They are of the opinion that human culture is not only marked by human language, one semiotic system, but even by images, gestures, sounds and objects. “Yet the particular semiotic competence that forms the basis for our human culture is created only when all other semiotic systems cooperate with language.” (ibid.: 151)

In fact, we all feel the awareness of belonging to a culture, well-defined by common codes and sign systems. We are able to perceive the sign systems we are familiar with, whereas we may misinterpret signs in foreign countries due to a lack of identifying codes of other countries. In order to be able to read a sign, we must interpret the coded reference that refers to some object. We fail to manage this semiotic process if we face sign-systems that we are unfamiliar with. A species' particular semiotic competence depends on its surrounding world, delimited by nature and culture.

(cf. ibid. :154)

A semiotic process is marked by a transition from objects to signs. Human beings perceive objects in their surrounding world and give them a denotative meaning at all times; they interpret objects to become signs. Therefore, cultures attribute meaning produced through culturally shared codes to signs. Meaning is actively created by human beings corresponding to the interplay of codes and conventions. According to Johansen and Larsen (2002: 168), ”this culture-forming process” allows “[...] information collection, communication, socialization and transmission of knowledge, experience and other social actions”.

2.3 Text versus Hypertext

In this chapter I want to have a closer look at both the term *text* and *hypertext* in order to contrast later on traditional tourist guides with online tourist guides. Of course, within this paper, a larger discussion about the question what a *text* is cannot be mastered because this would be an independent field of research. Nevertheless, it should be elucidated what is meant by *text* here in order to work out a useful contrast to *hypertext*. Traditional texts can be best compared with hypertexts by considering the different definitions of the latter and by determining then their characteristics with regard to text linguistics.

2.3.1 The Concept of Text

The narrow sense of *text* comprehends the written form of a speech, namely the expression of letters and words. This written message implies an intentional sense by the writer. The reader of a text is able to decode the intentional as well as the unintentional message. (cf. Hautzinger 1999: 55)

For the broader sense of *text*, I follow Wrobel's text definition that includes Posner's⁴ text conception. Wrobel (2003: 18) summarises that, in the broader sense, *text* means verbally and non-verbally encoded texts. Furthermore, she concludes that all units of a website, the structural design included, can be denoted as texts on certain conditions. These units of a website must be a result of intentional behaviour and they must have a function as well as a significance within a culture. "Text is no longer seen as a linear chain of signs as in traditional textual linguistics." (Hess-Lüttich 1998: 5) Now *text* is rather defined as "a sign construction" (ibid.). Hess-Lüttich's idea of *text* refers to the semiotic approach to text theory which is "[...] complex enough to integrate nonlinear, multicoded, multimedial texts [...]" (ibid.).

Consequently, with the help of the broader sense of *text* adopted by Wrobel and Hess-Lüttich, one may describe *hypertext* as text, too. Let us keep in mind in this work that besides the fact that *hypertext* may be classified as text, traditional text still implies

⁴ cf. Posner, R. (1991). „Kultur als Zeichensystem. Zur semiotischen Explikation kulturwissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe.“ 48-52. In: Assmann, A./Harth, D. (Hrsg.). *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument*. 37-74. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH.

a written form of communication. That is why I will refer to the narrow sense of *text* when I contrast it with *hypertext* at a later time.

A reader of a traditional book is habituated to its traditional organisation and structure, such as the table of contents, the front page with the title of the book, and its author as well as the date of publication and the publisher. He usually starts reading at the beginning of the book, at the first page, and then he follows the sequence fixed by the writer up to the end. The writer normally does not animate its reader to jump over certain passages or to change the order of the chapters. He should rather follow the linear order the way the author provides it. Having finished the book, the reader holds the complete version in his hands. Well, one should bear in mind that this reading process is presented ideally. (cf. Hautzinger 1999: 56)

Certainly, there are also texts that enable the reader to break this linear reading process by having a look at the table of contents and choosing a part of a book according to his interest or purpose. But these exceptions one may find in traditional tourist guides are not of interest in this chapter because they are not very helpful for the opposed investigation of traditional text and hypertext. Traditional texts are written linearly and mostly divided in three sections, namely a beginning, one or more topical sections, and an end. Sequential organisation is of great importance.

2.3.2 The Concept of Hypertext

The term *hypertext* is immediately coming up when one deals with websites and hence with the internet service World Wide Web, enabling the user to view these documents with images or hypertext structures. Considered to be something special, *hypertext* has been “hyped” to a large extent in the last years. But what is “hyper with hypertext” (cf. Storrer 2000: 222)? Before getting to the bottom of the phenomenon *hypertext*, let me elucidate its concept.

With the development of the World Wide Web, the researchers' interest of the new form of publication and communication has induced the awareness of the *hypertext* concept, which seemed to be a menace for books, so-called traditional texts.

Ted Nelson⁵ had a formative influence on the term *hypertext*, pursuing Vannevar Bush's⁶ idea of linking parts of text by so-called hyperlinks, and therefore inaugurating the development of link-based hypertext nets. The computer liberates the writer from sequential writing and makes it possible to indicate links between ideas and thoughts. (cf. Storrer 2000: 225-28) This principle is explained more exactly by Jakob Nielsen (1990). According to him, “hypertext is nonsequential; there is no single order that determines the sequence in which the text is to be read. [...] That means that the author has set up a number of alternatives for readers to explore rather than a single stream of information.” (Nielsen 1990: 1-2). *Hypertext* consists of interlinked texts containing information which are set up in so-called nodes. Each unit of information hidden behind such a node points to other units. These pointers are called links. Readers do not just read the units of information, they rather browse or navigate within the network of nodes and links. The reader's eye moves about the page in order to look for the sequences he is interested in, with some parts being the focus of attention and other parts being completely ignored.

For linguists dealing with the field of text linguistics, the concept *hypertext* is a challenge, since its terminology is highly polysemous. When one speaks of *hypertext*, then two principal sorts may come into one's mind, these are printed and electronic *hypertexts*. Many researchers restrict the definition of *hypertext* to the latter. The most typical description of both electronic and printed *hypertexts* is that of “non-linear texts that consist of textual units and links between them” (Jucker 2005: 286). In his remarks about *hypertext*, Jucker (ibid.) includes printed *hypertexts* in the definition. In contrast to Jucker, I would like to give only attention to electronic *hypertexts* in my paper, as I will be dealing with tourism websites.

As different approaches to the concept of *hypertext* are common among linguists, some will be briefly presented here. Jucker (ibid.) describes *text* as linear and *hypertext* as multi-linear. Fetzer (2005: 325) agrees with him by pointing out that “text and hypertext represent two different modes for the presentation of information”. Fetzer (ibid.) investigates the aspect of linearity on individual constitutive nodes and on *hypertext* as a whole. She points out that “regarding the individual constitutive nodes,

5 Ted Nelson coined the term *hypertext*.

6 Vannevar Bush is known as the developer of the idea Memex, a prototype hypertext computer system, pioneering the concept for the WWW.

the constraint of linearity obtains. Regarding the hypertext as a whole, the constraint of linearity does no longer obtain.” (Fetzer 2005: 326). Instead, she concludes that a *hypertext* is multi-linear. Whereas other linguists, such as Storrer (2000: 227) and Kuhlen (1991: 27) are of different opinion by claiming that *hypertexts* present information in a non-linear mode. This characterisation is more suitable for the comparison of traditional *text* and *hypertext* as a whole.⁷

Many important features for the specification of the term *hypertext* have been emerged in the preceding remarks. Pointing out the three most important properties of *hypertext*, I want to propose then a definition following the different elaborations of computer scientists and linguists. First of all, it is important to emphasise that *hypertext* cannot become visible without a computer. This special form of text actually depends on the medium computer; one also speaks of medium-dependent texts. Furthermore, its quality of representing information and linking texts with each other by means of nodes, respectively links, is very dominant in all definitions of this network. Another representative characteristic of *hypertext*, adopting here Storrer (2000) and Kuhlen's (1991) aspect of non-linearity, is its non-sequential structure that allows the reader to navigate on his own. Taking all these characteristics into account, I would summarise the concept of *hypertext*⁸ as follows: *Hypertext* is a computer-based network of texts, images, and sounds connected by links presenting information in a non-linear organisation.

2.3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Hypertext

As I mentioned in the preceding chapters, hypertext has involved a great interest in several fields of research. Of course, my interest rather concerns the field of text linguistics, where hypertext can be assimilated and defined as another sort of text. Now I want to consider this special sort of text by outlining its advantages and disadvantages. It has become obvious that one cannot simply transfer the words *text*, *reader*, and *author* from the print medium to the electronic medium. Of course, the reader still reads

⁷ i.e. not only the individual constitutive nodes

⁸ The term *hypertext* is often equated with the term *hypermedia* including the multi-media aspect of textual and non-textual information. I will not lay any importance to this discussion and stay with *hypertext* as the established term including the multimedia aspect.

the way he learnt it through the print medium, but the medium computer entails far-reaching changes inducing new forms of communication. Knowledge is not only represented by writing but also by multimedia. Hypertext involves a different reading process.

The non-linear form of organisation supports selective reading, and thus, a more active reader. In her essay, Storrer (2000: 231-32) mentions the advantage of imparting knowledge to heterogeneous address groups. The reader or recipient decides which way to take through hypertext, that means, which links he joins, and which order he chooses. The reader gets the possibility to read as an author, or even to become the author by linking one document with another. Previous knowledge, preferences, interests, and purpose are decisive for choosing the links and the order. This significant characteristic is known under the term *interactivity*.

However, the reader's freedom of choice is limited by the links the author has set before. Producing the texts for hypertext is a challenge for the author who cannot predict the paths his prospective reader will take. This problem will be treated in more detail when analysing certain tourist websites in the second part of my paper. I will not list the issue of the reader's limitation concerning freedom of choice among the disadvantages because traditional texts, i.e. books, even restrict the offer of information.

Storrer (2000) also brings up the advantage of managing different media, such as text files, image files, audio files, or video files, that create new forms of communication, visual and auditory communication. Information can be presented more attractively that helps the user to easily find information.

Another advantage is the expense factor. Writers can publish their own texts faster and at low costs with the help of the World Wide Web. Furthermore, documents are globally retrievable and often, not always, up to date. Nevertheless, a hypertext information is updated at the expense of reliability. In order to avoid false information, the author is forced to verify regularly the existence of links and to check them for changes concerning the content. Users often come across dead links, namely links that have been removed or deleted, which could be very disappointing and annoying while one is surfing on the Internet. (cf. *ibid.*: 233)

Apart from the number of advantages that hypertext has to offer, there are still some disadvantages in comparison to traditional texts in books. Have you ever tried to read a

hypertext in bed? In fact, the most inconvenient restriction of hypertext is certainly its reliance on the medium computer. Storrer (2000: 229) describes hypertext as “Text, der sich nicht ohne Werteverlust auf Papier ausdrucken lässt.” Hypertexts rely on software to be produced and apprehended. Since the reader can only read the text as hypertext on the screen, he is forced to make cuts on the reading comfort. But since technology is making progress every day, this problem could be one day a thing of the past. The reception of written texts on the screen is slower and even more tiring. That is why hypertext is rather practical for only reading relevant information instead of delving into a text as the reader prefers to do it with a book. One term that is often connected to this reading activity is *to scan*, looking quickly, but not very carefully at a document because one wants to have a particular information for a certain purpose.

Hypertext sometimes causes difficulties in navigating due to bad web design. The more extensive the hypertext, the greater the probability for users of losing orientation. While browsing through the website and choosing several links, users may have difficulties either in finding their way back from one link to the homepage or in remembering which links they have already visited. This problem is well-established under the terminology “lost in hyperspace”. Well-structured links, explicit advice for users and good web design are helpful to avoid the problem of losing one's orientation.

2.4 Traditional Tourist Guides versus Online Tourist Guides

In the previous chapters, advantages and disadvantages of hypertext have been brought out. Websites use the hypertext structure to present information in a non-linear way. Wrobel (2003: 24) describes websites as “Realisationsformen von Hypertexten”, emphasizing their characteristics being non-linearly structured, multiply encoded and, of course, computer-based. As not all applications are suited for hypertext, Ben Shneiderman (qtd. in Nielsen 1990: 43) proposed three golden rules of hypertext:

- 1) A large body of information is organised into numerous fragments.
- 2) The fragments relate to each other.
- 3) The user needs only a small fraction at any time.

All three arguments meet with tourist guides. Consequently, one would claim that tourist guides are well suited for hypertext. The number of online tourist guides, or

tourism websites, has increased with the growth of the World Wide Web. Therefore, this chapter will have a closer look at the usefulness of hypertext with regard to its application on tourist guides, contrasting the latter with traditional tourist guides. Some properties of hypertext will be outlined with the aim of confirming why hypertext application is here quite effective and favourable.

As tourists with different interests and intentions are looking for particular information, that means a small part of the information about a city or country, the non-linear organisation of online tourist guides giving the possibility of linking is very useful. The information can easily be divided into nodes. Each tourist attraction, historical site, or tourist service can be put into one node. According to their interests, they can select a path through varied links that fulfil their needs and their demands. Furthermore, the non-linear structure allows the online tourist guide addressing to a heterogeneous group of people. (cf. Storrer 2000: 228) Those people can freely choose between numerous links offered by the author.

Hypertext interlinks nodes that may contain different media, such as text files, image files (graphics), audio and video files. Online tourist guides providing these different hypermedia files offer their users a larger variety of information in form of text, images, being just illustrations or including hypertext links, sound and video. The use of hypermedia makes the tourist guide more illustrative, more interesting, and sometimes more authentic. The author, or rather the producer, of a tourist website can add audio samples allowing the user, for example, to listen to typical music of a country, or to its language. Video files can also contribute to a more realistic and vivid impression of the tourist's destination.

Tourist guides take advantage of the computer-based text because the publishing of information as hypertext in form of websites saves a lot of money. Moreover, information on websites can be updated more often and faster. Updating or changing text units does not require much time and energy. Not only does the producer of tourism websites benefit from the computer-based aspect but also the user, maybe a prospective tourist, does. Surfing on the Internet and consulting the online tourist guide is definitely cheaper than buying a traditional tourist guide in form of a book.

Another benefit being also of great importance to many tourists is finding up-to-date information on the tourist website. Changes in content can be carried out faster and theoretically more often, or information can be added more easily. Traditional tourist guides publish a new edition at most once a year due to the high costs for printing.

Of course, hypertext application on tourist guides is not only of advantage. There are some practical disadvantages connected with electronic publishing. Holding a disc in your hand instead of a book would cause some problems. One would not be able to read it everywhere, not in bed, or on the bus. Its reliance on computers is hindering when one prefers reading some more information about a country during the journey, or even in bed. In this situation a book would be more handy. Even a small portable computer would probably not be very practical because it is still more unmanageable than a book.

2.5 Assessment Criteria to Evaluate Websites

Many different evaluation concepts of websites have been developed including numerous characteristics. The chapter offers the elements or criteria that are relevant for evaluation. Dealing with different website appearances with the aim of comparing and evaluating them raises the question of which criteria might be useful for a comprehensive investigation. Before dealing with the assessment criteria which will play a role in my investigation on tourism websites, the next chapter will concentrate on the term *website*.

2.5.1 The Term Website

As having been noted in different publications, there are several varying spellings for this term. The Oxford English Dictionary (2000) lists *website*, as the term is commonly used. However, the Merriam Webster Dictionary⁹ uses the two-word, capitalised spelling *Web site* due to the fact that *Web* is not a general term, but a shortened form of *World Wide Web*. An alternative version would be *web site*, not capitalised.

⁹ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition. In: Merriam-Webster Online: <http://www.m-w.com/>.

A common spelling has not been definitely established yet. This controversy also applies to derivative terms such as *Web page/web page* or *webpage*. I will take up the preferred spellings listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, that is *website* and *web page*.

The common and more general understanding of the term *website* includes a collection of web pages written in HTML¹⁰, and the Internet presence of an individual, an organisation, or a company. In order to examine the term *website* with regard to its text linguistic aspect, I would like to refer to Eva-Maria Jakobs. She understands *websites* “as a term covering different communicative patterns (types of websites)” (Jakobs 2005: 71). Her text linguistic comprehension of the term *website* is the following:

Der Begriff Website bezeichnet eine Kommunikationsform, der sich eine große Anzahl im Internet verfügbarer, nach verschiedenen kommunikativen Gebrauchsmustern produzierter Anwendungen des Darstellungsprinzips Hypertext zuordnen lassen. Diese Anwendungen lassen sich als institutionell, funktional oder thematisch begrenzte Teilnetze von Modulen beschreiben, die – für einen bestimmten kommunikativen Zweck hergestellt – einer thematischen Gesamtvorstellung folgen; Funktion und Thema liefern den kontextuellen Rahmen für das Verständnis der einzelnen Module. (qtd. in Jakobs 2005: 79)

However, according to Eva-Maria Jakobs (ibid.: 80), the definition *website* in itself does not exist, but only “[...] eine Vielzahl von Kommunikaten, die sich als Realisierungen von Websitetypen oder -mustern analysieren und bewerten lassen [...]”. She enumerates the following examples as types of websites: online-town council, job market, personal homepages, or profit organisation such as a bank. Then, online tourist guides may be another type of website.

We can gather from this definition that the primary goal of any website is to communicate. Every website managed by an individual, an organisation, or a company serves a particular purpose. Therefore, a *website* is a special form of communication. What is communicated by the website depends on the type of website. Mark Boardman (2005: 1) defines *website*¹¹ more generally as “[...] a particular kind of electronic text that is technologically and culturally related to some aspects of written communication, but websites also have a relationship with spoken interaction and with other forms of electronic text”.

10 Hyper Text Markup Language, the predominant Markup language for the creation of web pages

11 The term *website* denotes the whole Internet appearance.

The terms *website* and *web page* must not be used synonymously. *Website* refers to the whole web appearance of a company, institution, or a private person, commonly found under a particular domain name. It is a collection of web pages. The latter are documents transferred from the website's server to display in the browser window.

2.5.2 Evaluation of Websites

Assessment criteria for websites differ from one subject to another due to cultural, group specific differences as well as individual preferences. Different models of evaluating websites with the help of certain criteria already exist. Websites have to accommodate many demands that differ from website to website due to the fact that the World Wide Web offers websites of varying categories. Thus, the web appearance of a bank clearly differs from a web appearance of a tourist guide. This chapter shall now clarify the procedure for determining criteria relevant for tourism websites.

In order to solve the problem, I made use of an essay on evaluation approaches for websites by Eva-Maria Jakobs (2005). She looks at examples from the banking sector in order to examine criteria for website evaluation. Furthermore, she presents two different principles that allow experts to gain their knowledge about evaluation criteria for websites. On the one hand, the principle of construction is used to make assumptions about when a website is to be assessed as well-designed. Evaluation aspects are deduced from a descriptive model for a certain object. Then, examples of the object class are picked out and analysed with regard to the chosen characteristics or aspects. Examples that score well, so-called “best-in-class” (ibid.: 73) examples, serve later as desired values. (cf. ibid.) An evaluation procedure that is often applied in practise is the study of heuristics, collections of guidelines, based on scholarly knowledge, or on practical experience. On the other hand, there is the principle of reconstruction that implies empirical research. With the help of user tests, one is able to draw ones' conclusions about subjective concepts as well as conclusions about the users of the target group and their preferences. (cf. ibid.: 74) In fact, both procedures have advantages and disadvantages in research and in practise, but I will not point them out here because of the limited scope of the paper. It should be emphasized that my method of evaluating

websites refers to the principle of construction or, to be more precise, to the principle of heuristics as I will be using selected criteria from Nielsen and Tahir's (2002) usability guidelines.

Evaluation proceedings can differ from each other. Interests and values of social groups strongly influence ratings. Jakobs (2005) investigates the mainly qualitative-oriented rating proceeding, called the "ibi Website Ranking", where the Institute for Research of the University of Regensburg has analysed 400 German-speaking financial services in Germany, in Austria, and in Switzerland. Four main criteria divided into 276 detailed criteria have been assessed. These four criteria are: advisory quality, usability, online-banking and online-brokerage, as well as further information. For the investigation of tourist websites, other qualities are decisive to fulfil the user's demands. In this case, the user is probably a prospective tourist. The choice of assessment criteria and their validity depends on the researcher's point of view and on the aims pursued by the evaluation. The "ibi Website Ranking" considers the advisory offer from its textual and communicative perspective. The criterion of textual quality includes motive-oriented information, information quantity, and information quality as well as its individualisation. Communicative quality comprehends here only usability qualities such as design elements, textual and visual clarity, navigation, and help and support. (cf. Jakobs 2005: 77-78)

However, Jakobs criticises the fact that the communicative task of consulting is broadly reduced to the act of informing. Furthermore, this proceeding lacks the linguistic aspect, which is a very important criterion, since language is the primarily used code for achieving the intended business objectives of a website. For my investigation on tourist guides, special emphasis will be placed on a "linguistic and communication science-based approach" (ibid.: 71). The focus is here laid on the application of linguistic-visual means realising the goals of a website.

The model for analysing types of websites proposed by Jakobs (ibid.) considers external conditions and linguistic-visual means. External conditions include the purpose of the website. The producer's role and interests as well as the user's/addressee's interests or goals have to be specified in order to implement the purpose of the site in form and content. The evaluation of linguistic-visual means in Jakob's approach

comprises hierarchy, structuring, the visual layout of content and interface, as well as questions concerning scale and interactive elements. Assuming that texts as cultural artefacts fulfil certain tasks in certain situations, one may suggest that a website as a cultural artefact is a form of communication which is produced to fulfil a certain communicative purpose. Considering different types of websites, the purpose may certainly vary from one type to another. As this paper will give priority to the linguistic and communication science-based approach, I adopt Jakob's criteria which concentrate not only on an economical approach, as this is the case with the “ibi Website Ranking”, but rather on a more linguistic approach. Nevertheless, the rich offer of criteria to evaluate websites gave rise to search for further models in order to single out which criteria might be helpful for the evaluation of online tourist guides.

Apart from different organisations that made assessments of websites their business, I came across a page of a forum¹² where someone was asking for help concerning his project of evaluating websites of associations. He asked users which criteria they consider relevant for a website. There, I discovered a more or less detailed listing to what users attach a certain importance, divided into three parts: Information, Design and Layout, Communication and Interaction. This first rough division, whose parts are even to be found in evaluation models created by researchers or experts, is very useful for determining website criteria.

When dealing with websites and their evaluation, one inevitably comes across “the guru of Web page usability”, Jakob Nielsen. Nielsen and Tahir (2002) present 113 design guidelines for homepages with regard to the three main parts mentioned before. Since taking into consideration all 113 guidelines will not be possible in this thesis, and will not be of interest for my investigation, I take up the criteria of Information, Design and Layout, Communication and Interaction, and complete them with only some of Nielsen's proposed design guidelines, which are added to the three main categories as sub items, or sub criteria.

12 In: www.informationsarchiv.net/foren/beitrag-19172.html.

2.5.3 Assessment criteria to Evaluate Tourism Websites

Not only does Jakob Nielsen (1996: 113) recognise the usefulness of hypertext application on tourist guides, but many other people, too, as one might gather from the large number of tourism websites. The fact that tourists are often interested in just a small part of information about a country or a culture is favourable for hypertext application. Tourist guides often give information about accommodation, shopping, food and drink, sights and so on. As already presented in detail in chapter 2.3, the practical thing about hypertext is that these information can easily be divided into nodes or links. However, there are many different tourism websites which differ from each other in structure and look. Each producer of a website has to decide about the individual look of his site and about the kind of information with regard to the target group.

Goals and purposes may vary from website to website, depending on the type of website and on the individual intentions of each producer. Hence, each design criterion takes different positions for different websites. The assessment criteria that will be immediately presented consider the following three main parts: Information, Design and Layout, and Communication and Interactivity.

All three parts present specific sub criteria being decisive for the evaluation of tourist guides. I would like to start with the first part, Information. Quality is an important criterion when dealing with websites in general and, equally, with tourism websites, as people planning to visit a country, in this case Kenya, want to have different information on the country. Furthermore, they would like to avoid putting their foot in their mouth. Therefore, they are dependent on accuracy and on topicality of all information. According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 14), “effective content writing is one of the most critical aspects of all web design”. Since users searching for specific information prefer scanning the content of a website, it is really important to put a maximum of information in just few words.

In order to attract visitors, the website should present its great variety of information about Kenya. The tourist wants to choose from the large offer with regard to his preferences for making holidays. Thus, quantity is a critical aspect for online tourist guides, too.

The following evaluation criterion, information editing, deals with the existence of headlines and the formulation of the presented information. Headlines are quite an important aspect, since they serve as focal points that make the user either read the paragraph or ignore it completely. If the headline interests him, then he is willing to read the smaller text. If the headline indicates information that the user wants to find out more about, he will click on the link. Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 14) underline the use of “customer-focused language” giving him the feeling to be the centre of interest. Users quite often misinterpret categories or sections due to “company-focused” (ibid.) labelling. It would be more effective to know what users look for when searching information. In addition, Nielsen and Tahir dissuade from catchy marketing phrases that might cause problems of grasping the meaning of such a clever phrase. The user does not want to be forced to click on a link just to figure out what information is hidden behind the link. Even if the promotional aspect of tourist guides cannot be denied, it is nevertheless recommendable to mostly avoid vague phrases. Otherwise, one may risk to loose users.

The aspect of a clear structure of information considers not only the existence of headings and their formulation, as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, but rather the clear textual and visual arrangement of links aiming at finding information as fast as possible.

Moreover, a website always tries to address a certain group of people. That is the same with tourist guides, which angle for catching the public, or rather the kind of tourist the travel organisation is promoting for. There is clearly a difference between young and old people certainly having different ideas of being on holiday. It is also important to keep in mind that tourists may even vary in terms of interests and preferences. Some tourists prefer lying on the beach, doing sports, or going shopping in contrast to the preferences of cultural tourists, who will be of interest in my evaluation of online tourist guides. To sum it up, focussing on a specific target group is an essential criterion for creating a website because content and design do not equally appeal to different groups of people.

The second main part concerns Design and Layout, which have both the demand to attract users at first glance and to draw their attention to the most important elements of the website. If and how quickly a prospective tourist can locate the information he is

searching for depends on the layout. The first impression of a website is decisive for users to stay on this site. A well-structured website influences the user's overall impression positively. In order to attract users and to make them visit a website once again, the general idea of its design must satisfy the user. The user's website experience should be enjoyable.

The choice of colour is an aspect that is of great importance, too, considering the recognition value of a website. When we take tourist websites in contrast to websites of the banking sector that are mostly created more soberly and conservatively, then a more colourful design would be advisable here. As the tourism sector is connected to holidays, entertainment, amusement, recreation, getting away from everyday life, all in all to rather positive feelings, colours are a good means to implement these things. This criterion raises the following questions: How many colours are used? Do the colours match or clash? And which effect is evoked by the choice of colour? “[...] High-contrast text and background colors” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 23) support readability.

Websites also present their content through the use of graphics. The combination of texts and graphics can greatly enrich a website. From a didactic perspective, the combination of different information, such as digitised text, graphics and animation, and sound, is more meaningful and more beneficial than traditional text. The specific use of visual and acoustic elements, thus, facilitates the user's perception of information. Nevertheless, it is important to keep a good average of texts and graphics because they “[...] can weigh down the design in visual clutter and slow download times [...]” (ibid.: 22). Graphics should only be used to present real content and not just for decoration or for drawing attention.

Another criterion, the length of a page, should clearly be kept in mind when one considers the design of a website. According here to Fukuda (2004: 25) who gives recommendations on how to design a website, the page of a website is influenced by the resolution of the monitor. A high-resolution monitor can show more information than a low-resolution monitor. Consequently, the user is forced to move the content, or view data, with the help of the mouse. Therefore, the lower the resolution of the monitor, the higher is the scroll potential. It is advisable to reduce this trouble by limiting the length of the page to one, or at maximum to three screen pages. If it is necessary to scroll the information, then, of course, the important information should be provided without

scrolling, even in the first screen, in order to avoid that users miss reading content.

The font size of websites is relative because it depends again on size and on resolution of the user's monitor. Nevertheless, the median font size of 12 points is recommendable to allow readability. I would claim that this font size is convenient for most people, even for elderly people. Nielsen recommends the limitation of font styles and text colours because too much text design may distract readers from the content. (cf. Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 23)

User success is particularly put down to the offer of links. Users want to find a specific information as fast as possible while scanning the website. Brief and specific links that bear the information-carrying word should differentiate the content. Users want to know immediately what they can expect behind a link, so including text with real meanings would be a good advice. Keeping links too general disturbs the user's search for a small part of information. Different colours for visited and unvisited links simplify the reading process. The colours should be discernible in contrast to the text colour.

What is really fundamental in order to support the user recognising the website is the consistency of the look of the page. It helps the user to avoid getting "lost in hyperspace", that means to avoid losing the orientation on the website. Here applies the phrase "form follows function". Besides the lavish design of some websites, its usability must not drop away. Web design is characterised by its strong reader orientation due to the fact that users are often looking for specific information, just a small part of databases. Moreover, they only visit a website as long as absolutely required.

Finally, the last point at which we should have a look is Communication and Interactivity. Both are key factors regarding website usability. Interactivity shall encourage the user to react to the website, and to autonomously satisfy his need for information. This takes place, on the one hand, in the communication between the reader and the author, or between one reader and another reader within a communication forum, and, on the other hand, in the user's individual selection of links.

Interactivity is provided by the process of moving from one page to another known as navigation. The user reacts to predetermined requests leading him through the website's content. While looking for information on the web, he wants to find his way

through the web as fast as possible by following links. Consequently, each designer of a website is interested in providing good navigation. It is the user's choice how he moves the content. It should always be clear for the user how he can easily get from one topic to another and what means are provided to go back from where he started. A hierarchical navigation is very common. This model goes from the general to the specific; from the homepage to other pages containing main categories or sub categories. Main and specific information can be found with the help of hierarchically divided sections tied together. The user can easily navigate through the site, from the homepage to other pages of the website, and back to the starting point. This principle of navigation offering the user access to all pages of the website is quite simple and clear.

Furthermore, a site map is a very helpful navigation tool to get an overview of the existing menu or the content in general, and to learn how to use the website, as not only seasoned internet users surf the web. This is a great help for users who might have some difficulties to find their way through the web because they are possibly not used to the web.

Search is an essential element for finding information. Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 20) recommend to “[...] make it visible, make it wide, and keep it simple [...]”. According to them, an input box is preferable to a search page. Placing a search button in a high-priority position on the page, that is at the top of the page, allows the user to find it immediately. This sort of search feature is very common on websites.

In order to stimulate his activity, the user should have the possibility to give a feedback on the website. Providing a contact address, preferably an email address, is desirable in case that users have questions to raise, comments, or propositions to make. As users often want to communicate with others, exchange their knowledge, experiences, interests and concerns, a forum should be an integral element on the website. This criterion plays a relevant role for tourism websites, since people planning a stay in a particular country have the possibility to learn important hints, even insider tips, and to resolve problems and doubts with the help of others who maybe have already visited the country. The following listing in Table 1 outlines the selected assessment criteria for the succeeding evaluation of tourism websites once again at a glance.

Table 1: Assessment Criteria for Websites

Information	Design and Layout	Communication and Interactivity
Quality Quantity Information Editing Clarity Target Group	General impression Colours Graphics/Animation Font Styles, Font Size Links	Navigation Search Contact Forum

2.6 The Target Reader: A Cultural Tourist

As we want to look at tourist guides from a cultural tourist's point of view, it is helpful to provide a definition of a *cultural tourist*. Indeed, an established definition of this term does not exist. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between a person who is interested in culture and a person, or tourist, whose reason and purpose for making holidays in a particular country is culture. The term *cultural tourist* stems from the new form of tourism developed in the last years, that is *cultural tourism*. Identifying this term helps determining a definition for *cultural tourist*. But due to the difficulty in delimiting both constituents of the word, a definition of *cultural tourism* is not without problems either. The expression *cultural tourism* seems to evoke a feeling of superiority to mass tourism that is rather aimed at the tourists' recreation. Cultural tourism contributes to stand out from the crowd by communicating a feeling of prestige.

According to a study of the European Union, *cultural tourism* may be understood as:

Travel undertaken with the intention, wholly or partly, of increasing one's appreciation of Europe's cultural resources. A cultural resource is any place, structure artefact or event, the experience of which increases a visitor's appreciation of the origins, manners, tastes and customs of the host region. (Irish Tourist Board et. al. 1988: 3)¹³

This definition includes the tourist's demand for cultural activities. Even though the definition of cultural tourism is here restricted to Europe, I want to expand this interpretation in order to adopt it for a general definition of cultural tourism that does not only apply to European tourism.

¹³ In: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulturtourismus>.

Axel Dreyer (2000) formulates a similar definition:

Mit Kulturtourismus werden alle Reisen bezeichnet, denen als Reisemotiv schwerpunktmäßig kulturelle Aktivitäten zugrunde liegen. Tourismuswirtschaftlich werden alle Aktivitäten als kulturell bezeichnet, die der Reisende als solche empfindet. (2000: 26)

Keeping the term *cultural tourism* in mind, we now can deduce a definition for *cultural tourist*. Considering the assumption that cultural tourism denotes travelling aimed at cultural activities, then a *cultural tourist* may be characterised as a person whose cultural motives for travelling rank first. The organisation “Citizens for the Arts”¹⁴ in Pennsylvania defines *cultural tourists* as “special interest travellers who rank the arts, heritage and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for travelling”. Hence, cultural events or, in general, the culture of their travel destination, play a central role, and are the primary reason for travelling. These tourists consequently spend more time and money on cultural activities, such as heritage, arts, and history. This sort of tourist prefers holidays providing education and entertainment at the same time.

14 In: <http://www.paarts.org/>.

3 Website Analysis of Tourist Guides

The second main part will deal with the application of the theoretical considerations. The main interest will be the evaluation of three tourism website samples and their cultural analysis, as well as a usability statistics of 30 online tourist guide samples.

First, a lexical differentiation between different terms for the first page, the entry page, of a website will be the starting point. Then, the selection of 30 website samples will be classified into different groups in order to have later a closer look at a website analysis of three homepage samples. These samples will also serve as exemplification of a cultural analysis which is aimed at examining how culture is communicated through the medium website. The last part will deal with the study of all 30 tourism website samples, which will be summarised in a usability statistics. Some important design criteria will be taken up again to give information about how different features have been realised on these tourist guides.

The tourism websites for this study have been arbitrarily selected from the World Wide Web in order not to influence the later investigation of those websites by having already made a preliminary decision. The 30 samples include real tourist guides as well as personal websites about Kenya, serving here as tourist guides. The websites have been viewed on a 17" monitor at a 1024 x 768 resolution which is common among home users.

3.1 Homepage, Start Page or Index Page?

Everyone of us has probably already met with the terms *homepage*, *start page*, or *index page*. The issue of which term is the most appropriate term to denote the first page, the entry page, of a website will be discussed in this chapter. Dealing with their definitions should bring about an approach to that problem of application. Considering the term *homepage* induces different associations. Many internet users are certainly familiar with this term denoting the first page of a website.

The encyclopedia Wikipedia¹⁵ defines homepage as:

- The URL or local file that is automatically loaded when a web browser starts is called homepage or startpage.
- The startpage, front page or *main web page* of a website of a group, company, or organization. The homepage offers guidance through a website and usually includes hyperlinks to other web pages of the website.
- A personal homepage, usually a page featuring an individual user. If there is more than one page, it becomes a personal website, rather than a personal homepage.
- In Germany the term 'homepage' commonly refers to a complete website (of a company/organization) rather than to a single web page.

As mentioned in this definition, the terms *homepage* and *startpage/start page* are synonymously used. An *index page* is another term commonly used to denote the main page of a website that guides the user through the whole website. Its name originates from the web server that considers a default or index web page, such as *index.html* or *index.htm* as the entry to a website. In order to facilitate typing of website addresses for the user, the provider even recognises the address without adding *index.html* at the end. Decomposing all three words, we can have a closer look at the meaning of the terms *home*, *start*, and *index*.

Home commonly denotes a house, a flat, a country where you live in, especially with your family, or where you come from. When we try to transfer one of those meanings to websites, then the last characterisation makes sense. *Home* describes a place where you come from. On a website, the user normally starts at the beginning of a particular website, that is the main page, and uses the many links to read other pages of this website. The point where the user started the reading or search process would then be called *home*. Consequently, the page where the user came from is the *homepage*.

The noun *start* denotes the point at which something begins, the beginning. As the main page is the entry, or the beginning to every website, *start page* is also an appropriate designation.

What about *index page*? An *index* describes a list of names or topics arranged at the beginning or at the end of a book in alphabetical order. The main page of a website mostly indicates which information is provided in the following pages. Topics are often divided into links, which are not implicitly arranged in alphabetical order.

15 In: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homepage>.

As we have seen above, all three denotations for the website's beginning are qualified. Which word to use always depends on one's preference. This discussion cannot present a definite answer. These expressions will exist side by side, but some people may give preference to one of these terms. I prefer using the term *homepage*, since *home* is very often indicated as a link on websites in order to find one's way back to the page from where one started, namely the *homepage*. Nevertheless, its use for denoting personal websites is controversial. In order to avoid misunderstanding in this paper, *homepage* always refers to the start page of a website and not to the whole Internet appearance.

3.2 Website Classification

“As they do in any medium, criteria for web-design quality vary with the genre and authors' goals.” (Shneiderman 1998: 562) Different website classifications have been suggested by scholars. Shneiderman (ibid.) offers four ways of categorising websites in general. One way considers the initiator's identity. He lists, for example, an individual, a group, a corporation, or a non-profit organisation. Another way of categorising is by the initiator's goals, such as presentation of information, promotion of products, or entertainment. A third category differentiates websites according to the number of web pages or amount of information. And a fourth possibility of categorising websites is by measures of success, e.g. by the number of visits.

Tourism websites have the goal to inform people, promote a product, a particular city or country, as well as to entertain. Nevertheless, the form of Internet appearances of tourist guides is clearly varied. Their differences mostly refer to quantity, i.e. screen elements, and quality, i.e. content. Considering the websites' homepages immediately presents differences with regard to quantity. In order to classify tourist guides according to their form of representation, the creation of further categories is necessary. I have divided the presented selection of 30 tourism websites into three groups¹⁶ due to their organisation of content. One website out of each group will then be chosen for a further detailed analysis.

¹⁶ The homepages divided into these three groups can be viewed in the Appendices.

The presented selection of tourism websites offers the user either websites with an equilibrated representation of links, text and images (Group I), or websites predominantly with text (Group II), or even websites containing either many links and only sparse text, or only links (Group III). Table 2 presents the tourism websites assigned to these three groups.

Table 2: Classification of 30 Tourist Guides

Group I	Group II	Group III
Bwana Zulia's Kenya Travel Guide	Africa.com	Africanet
Insight Guides	Africa Point	Kenya Beach Travel
Kenyalogy	Go 2 Africa	Kenya.com
Kenyaspace	Kenya-Travel	Kenya1Tours
Lonely Planet	Kenya Travel Ideas	RCBowen KENYA page
Magical Kenya	One World – Nations Online	Virtual Tourist
Pilot Destination Guide	The Africa Guide	Visit Kenya
Rough Guides	Tourism Kenya	Visit-Kenya
TIM'S AND LARA BETH'S KENYA		Will Go To
Word Travels		
World 66		
Worldsurface		
World Travel Guide		

3.3 Website Analysis of Samples

In order to examine hypertext usability of tourist guides, three sample tourism homepages¹⁷ will next serve as analysis examples. Each sample belongs either to the website category Group I, Group II, or Group III. (cf. chapter 3.2) With the elaborated assessment criteria, the principle requirements for the content and structure of tourism websites from a cultural tourist's perspective will be evaluated. A screenshot of each sample has been added to give an impression of how the website looks like on the user's

¹⁷ The term *homepage* refers here to the start page of a website, as indicated in chapter 3.1.

screen.

I have chosen Magical Kenya (Figure 1) from Group I due to its attractive and clearly structured layout having immediately aroused my interest. The user recognises at once that this website promotes a particular country, here Kenya, by discovering typical associations with that African country. The homepage features a proper balance between links and text, and therefore, it represents the first group well. Magicalkenya.com is the official destination website of Kenya Tourist Board. It is an online travel guide offering travel tips and comprehensive information about places and activities. Users can get information on accommodation and travel options. Many examples of the website's content show the broad range of useful and cultural facts.

Kenya Travel Ideas (Figure 2) truly differs from the first example, Magical Kenya, for the matter of organisation. Here, text dominates the homepage. Kenyatravelideas.com likewise offers the user lots of information on Kenya's cultural diversity, travel tips, practical facts, as well as links to tour operators and airlines.

The homepages of sample Group III are characterised by representing mostly links, and sparse, or even no text. Kenya One Tours' homepage (Fig. 3) largely dominated by graphics and links represents this third group well in the way that information on the homepage is not so extensive, since illustrations and links take up most space on the homepage. Further information is only given when the user activates a link that takes him to another page of the website. The fact that Kenyan culture is already communicated to some extent on the homepage has also been decisive for the selection.

3.3.1 Sample Group I: Magical Kenya



Figure 1: Screenshot Magical Kenya

First, it will be analysed how information is qualitatively and quantitatively presented on Magical Kenya. In order to analyse the homepage of this web appearance in reference to the first aspect, Information, it is necessary to have a closer look at its content and its screen elements. The homepage pays attention to topicality by indicating recent news, the daily weather, and by even offering a featured destination changing regularly. The homepage offers the prospective tourist, a cultural tourist, a broad overview of content providing the country's peculiarities and a broad range of activities. Magical Kenya stands out due to its great variety of information about Kenya. The visitor, or rather the user, of this homepage gets information about different safaris and tours, accommodation, dining, shopping as well as Kenya's nature and culture. The tourist's choice depends on its preferences for making holidays. No matter what kind of tourist the user is, he can choose between different opportunities. This website really offers a lot of detailed information about all important things being relevant for a

cultural tourist, such as parks, nature, heritage, culture, or travels and tours.

The link “Travellers Guide” provides facts about, for example, how to plan a trip, how to get to Kenya, how to get around there, and it even offers an introduction to Swahili, which is very useful because people in Kenya are surely pleased to meet foreigners trying to speak Swahili. Getting an insight into the people's language, besides English, contributes to a better approach to Kenya's culture. Magical Kenya is very informative by providing qualitatively as well as quantitatively good information on the topics mentioned above.

The information on the homepage is well-structured and offers concise links on the left-hand side. A cultural tourist will be pleased to find information presented and grouped in a way that allows him to immediately have a closer look at offers for his specific target group, such as a cultural safari, nature, heritage, and Kenyan culture in general. The headlines for the links are explicitly formulated, so that users are able to make out what might be presented behind the links. As Nielsen and Tahir (2002) emphasise, “customer-focused language” supports the user's feeling of being the website's centre of interest. A fast search for information is provided on Magical Kenya because of the avoidance of catchy marketing phrases being rather a hindrance due to comprehension problems.

This homepage does not focus on a specific target group because its rich and varied offer attracts individual tourists, cultural tourists, adventurers, as well as families. Different target groups are appealed, as different safaris are offered according to the kind of tourist, for example wildlife safari, beach safari, cultural safari. The information presented on this homepage is clearly and logically structured. This clarity allows the user to find information as fast as possible. All in all, the homepage presents a “proper” amount of information.

Magical Kenya's design looks very illustrative and appealing at first sight. My first impression of this website was that it is well-structured and very colourful. Moreover, it supports the user's general idea of Kenya by having positioned a typical picture of a lion wandering through the grass at the top of the page. Magical Kenya ensures that the user does not overlook important information by having a low scroll potential, about a full screen. This criterion is essential to allow user-friendliness.

Although being very colourful, the structure is clear. The frame and the background of the links on the left are black contrasting with the coloured links. One finds the slogan “Magical Kenya” at the top across the picture of the lion, presented in the colours of the Kenyan flag. These are black, red, green, and white. Of course, each colour represents something. The colour black stands for the African people of Kenya, red for the blood shed in the fight for independence, green represents the fertility of the land, and white means peace. The shield of the warrior, which can be seen on the flag presented on the left side of the page, represents the pride and the tradition of the country. All in all, the colours chosen here do match, as the background is predominantly kept in different dark tones, black, dark brown, brown, and ochre. These well-chosen colours evoke the feeling of nature, wilderness, and Africa in general.

Recent news, different tour operators, featured destination with accommodation and travel options, as well as a flash animation with the changing request “Click here for safari, family, ... deals to Kenya” are placed in the centre of the page. Their positioning in that part of the homepage, at which most users will look first, aims at attracting the user to visit frequently used features, such as finding flights and booking holidays. Furthermore, the current weather of Nairobi and Mombasa is displayed indicating the website's interest of topicality. On the right, there is a green map of Africa with Kenya marked in red. Unfortunately, the user cannot click on this map to possibly get a closer look at the map of Kenya, or an overview of the other African countries. Moreover, there are two different advertisement banners on the right menu which are quite large. Advertising always risks to distract the user from the important content. Hence, small advertisements are recommendable. Only one of the ads seems to be interesting, namely the one of Kenya Airways displaying prices of flights within Kenya. It is positive that Magical Kenya does not carry too much promotion for other companies, since a median number of three ads “[...] seems to be an absolute upper limit from a usability perspective” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 50). Nevertheless, the homepage could have done without the advertisement on the left because the same is shown on the right.

The homepage keeps the combination of text and graphics in a good average. It is important that the graphics do not outweigh information in form of text because otherwise the user might be distracted from important information. Pictures are only added to underline the information. Keeping pictures within a limit emphasises the

advantageous multi-media use on websites making it appear more vivid.

The text on this homepage is written in the sans serif font Verdana. This is a good choice as “[...] readability is higher for sans-serif typefaces like Verdana and Arial” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 51). The font size is relative due to its dependence on monitor size, monitor resolution and on browser. The median font size is 8 points, what is barely acceptable on a 17" monitor with a 1024 x 768 monitor resolution – the most common for home users. As Magical Kenya has set up the rather user-unfriendly absolute font size indicated in points, some users who consider the font size to be too small might have problems to change it individually. The problems with absolute font sizes is that some browsers, e.g. Internet Explorer, make it difficult or impossible to change the size to suit the user's own preferences. The links on the left are not uniform because the font size varies from 7 points to 8 points. As the links are already distinguished from each other either through contrasting colours, through underlined words, or through capitalising letters, the choice of different font sizes affects the design in the way that it creates a busy effect.

The links on this website are placed in two ways, horizontally, or across the top of the page, and vertically. The horizontal links are grouped under the headline “So much to see” and the vertical links under “So much to do”. This arrangement of links clearly differentiates Kenya's multifaceted environments from leisure activities and practical information. A clear arrangement of information helps the user to find his way through the page. The user's attention is here drawn to important information. The vertically organised links are set up on the left of the homepage and divided into three parts. These parts are indicated by using different colours and different font styles. The first part located on the top of the link section, including seven different types of safaris, offers each link in capital letters, underlined, and in different colours. Below these links, information about accommodation, dining and shopping is represented in white capitalised letters and also underlined. Whereas the third link section on the left is differently marked. The words are kept in white, and only the beginning of each word is capitalised. It is also remarkable that these links are not underlined. Underlining is actually redundant because the mouse cursor, habitually in form of an arrow, is displayed as a hand when the user moves about the links. One has maybe chosen this kind of representation due to the fact that people immediately recognise a link as such

when it is underlined. However, it is not quite clear why the maker of the website has neither underlined nor capitalised all links on the page. The vertical links in the third part provide even more links that become visible when one moves the mouse cursor about a particular link. In the middle of the page, where information about featured destination and news are touched, links are again highlighted by using a different colour and by underlining the respective words within the text. The brown links are emphasised within the text. The user may differentiate between important and less important information.

Keeping usability in mind, the consistency of the design and layout of each page of a website is a major element because it is important for the user to recognize the page. The tourist guide Magical Kenya has designed each page just as the homepage. It helps the user to recognize the page and to avoid getting “lost in hyperspace”. The links are always arranged the same. The user finds them on the left and at the top of each page. Unfortunately, visited links are not distinguished from unvisited ones. The user's search would be more effective and faster if the user immediately recognised which links he has already visited.

Communication and Interactivity are also very important characteristics for a user-friendly website. Each designer of a website is interested in providing good navigation. A good ordering of screen elements effects the ease of navigation. This website makes this possible by having produced well-structured links which help the user to find his way back home, that means back to the homepage. All the links that can be found on the homepage are also provided on the following pages. The additional link “home” at the top of each text always brings the user back to his starting point.

Magical Kenya offers good orientation. It is the user's choice how he moves the content. Furthermore, the website offers a link which leads to a site map, which is very useful to get an overview of the existing menu or the content in general, and to learn how to use the website. This is a great help for users who might have some difficulties to find their way through the web because they are possibly not used to the web.

Magical Kenya provides a search input box top left, a well-chosen position for being easily recognised by the user. The black button with the request “Go” activating the search right from the input box is too small and hardly visible on the black background.

The page even offers the possibility of printing a page by the link “Print This Page” at the top of the page, and of e-mailing it by a further click on the link “E-mail This Page”. Interactivity is also elaborated by the link “Contact Us”. So, the user can ask questions, make any comments, propositions, and other things by clicking on this link. The reader finds travellers' tales about Kenya on the left where he can benefit from the travellers' experiences. But what I miss here is a forum where travellers can exchange their knowledge. This interactive aspect is welcomed by many users who appreciate the fact that they can learn from other travellers' experiences.

3.3.2 Sample Group II: Kenya Travel Ideas



Figure 2: Screenshot Kenya Travel Ideas

The online tourist guide seems to offer a broad choice of information, as a long list of 30 links is presented top down on the left. A link called “The Kenya Blog” provides latest updates of information, new pages, stories from tourists and so on. In the centre of the homepage, introductory information can be found what makes the user familiar with

Kenya Travel Ideas' guide.

Kenya Travel Ideas has two headlines, these are “kenyatravelideas.com” and “The Ultimate Kenya Travel Ideas Guide”. The repetitive notification of the name is rather redundant. As both include the name of the website, one headline would be sufficient. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to welcome the user by saying “Welcome to Kenya Travel Ideas”, since the headline already reveals the name of the website, and the user therefore certainly knows where he is. In the centre of the page, information is divided into paragraphs. Keywords are in bold print ensuring that particular information can be discovered quite fast.

A certain clarity is kept on this homepage by having separated the links from the text. Nevertheless, a lack of link categories lowers clarity, as the user is forced to read every link to find his desired information. A discreet choice of colours, dark red and light yellow for the background, emphasises the page's clarity and causes a better reception by the user.

This tourism website particularly attracts cultural tourists by addressing to this specific group of tourists in the centre of the homepage. The user is asked if he is “[...] one of these people who wants to be more of a **traveler** than a tourist?”¹⁸ The maker of this site refers here to people who want to get familiar with the different regions of the country, including the people's every day life, animals, and cooking traditions.

Considering design and layout of Kenya Travel Ideas' homepage in general, one can state that it is not overloaded with text and graphics. It is rather designed simply and plainly. The page, about 6 screens, is really too long. Consequently, the scroll potential is too high, what influences the homepage's usability negatively. Within a page, “compact vertical design to reduce scrolling is recommended” (Shneiderman 1998: 576). As users do not like to scroll down the page to gain an overview, the page length should not exceed three screens. “On the other hand, there's no need to cram everything onto a single screen as long as the most important features are visible above the fold.” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 40)

The warm reddish-brown colours as background colour for the links on the left, and light yellow as background colour for the text in the centre of the page, do match well. Using a contrast between light and dark achieves high readability. The headline is kept

¹⁸ The term *traveler* is here clearly delimited from the term *tourist* by implying that the latter is ordinary and, hence, inferior to *traveler*.

in red attracting the user's attention and increasing the website's promotional effect. The body text is black, and a high contrast to the light background is, therefore, achieved.

The four illustrations on the homepage represent typical ideas to Kenya, fascinating landscape and wildlife. Three pictures are displayed at the top of the page just above the text, one of a lion, one of Kenya's beautiful landscape, and one of an elephant. Another small picture of a group of antelopes is placed in the centre of the page. These illustrations truly loosen the web appearance and underline the introductory information on the homepage.

Large fonts and bold fonts styles typically indicate headings. Here, the font size is indicated in relative font sizes allowing the user to change the size according to his preferences. The use of relative units to set font sizes contributes to user-friendliness, and thus to usability. All text appears in a sans-serif typeface, which is recommendable in order to allow higher readability on the screen.

Links on the homepage are clearly marked, either as underlined words or word groups within the text, or as a long list kept in red and displayed on the left. Many information is presented on the left. Its positioning in this part of the homepage is truly preferable, as the user's eyes start looking up information on the upper-left. Unfortunately, the list of links on the left lacks sequencing. The links could have been divided into parts to allow the user to find particular information faster. First items on a website are often expected to be the most important ones and are therefore selected. No particular item is here emphasised. "Clustering related items show meaningful relationships" (Shneiderman 1998: 576), and hence, they should be divided into groups. Important information in the introductory text is highlighted in bold print. Unvisited links in the text are underlined in the commonly used link colour blue. Users can recognise the links they have already visited because these links are kept in purple. This differentiation avoids that users click repeatedly on the same link by mistake. Items in the navigation area should be organised in the way that similar items are next to each other. What I miss here are category names to differentiate similar information from others. "Grouping helps users to differentiate among similar or related categories and see the breadth of products or content you offer." (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 19) Kenya Travel Ideas has just listed every item one below the other. Sequencing information would allow the user to navigate more easily. Multiple positioning of links for the same

items is not necessary. Kenya Travel Ideas displays the links in the navigation area on the left as well as text links at the bottom of the homepage. One could drop out the links below the text. Otherwise the user might think by mistake that these are different links.

For facilitating navigation, a site map is to be found in the navigation area on the left. It provides orientation and an overview with all information categories from Kenya Travel Ideas. A “Home” link is included on the website. But it is only apparent on the other pages, the “link” pages, and not on the homepage, where it is clickable to take the user back to the homepage. There, it is presented as the first item top left on the navigation area. Of course, the homepage does not need an active “Home” link because some users might get confused and wonder if they actually are on the homepage. The user also has the possibility to get back to the homepage by clicking on the link offered below the provided text at the bottom of each page.

Search is essential for users. They want to find and use it easily. Here, the search field is displayed further down on the page, what is rather user-unfriendly, since it is not immediately visible. The user is forced to scroll the content on the homepage to find the search field. It would be better positioned at the top of the page. The makers of Kenya Travel Ideas have adopted the simple Google search input box, which most people are quite familiar with. An input box is of advantage due to their role as “the visual cue to search” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 20). Unfortunately, a search box is only displayed on the homepage. Despite the indicated differentiation between looking up information on the whole web, or only on the tourism website Kenya Travel Ideas, each search item is scanned on the whole web, what makes search more complex. One should not offer this possibility if it does not work the way it is suggested.

A concrete “Contact” link is missing on this website. The link “What started KTI¹⁹” gives information about the woman who became the owner of this website with the help of the organisation “Site Build It”. At the end of all those personal information, a contact link to the maker of this website is added. Clicking on this link, the user comes across a form to fill in. He can write an e-mail to Kenya Travel Idea's owner telling about his experiences, making suggestions, and giving any other input.

Kenya Travel Ideas does not offer a forum where people can exchange. But a similar option is submitted under the link “Your Kenya Ideas”. Another form with the user's

19 Kenya Travel Ideas

first name, e-mail address, city and country is provided where users can add their ideas, experiences, and recommendations. The website will then link to the visitor's contribution allowing the user to share his information with other visitors. Nevertheless, a forum, where visitors can immediately answer and react to other contributions without filling in a form, would allow better communication.

3.3.3 Sample Group III: Kenya1Tours



Figure 3: Kenya One Tours

The homepage with outweighing links does not give much information about information quality. As the website is a member of Kenya Association of Tour Operators, representing the interest of experienced professional tour operators, one might assume that the offered information is of high quality.

Kenya One Tours does not by far offer as much information as the two samples of the previous chapters. Useful information, such as immigration, money change, electricity and security, as well as different activities, for example diving and mountain

climbing, with more detailed information on trips and prices, are presented. What a cultural tourist might miss, is more information about the daily life and culture of Kenyan people.

Information is clearly structured by separating the headline and the graphic with the logo from the links. The headline and the logo are obviously highlighted in comparison to the links. The information is concisely formulated so that the user is able to gather easily which information is hidden behind the links. Doing without catchy marketing phrases allows the user to grasp the headlines of the links. This advantage in turn facilitates and accelerates the search for particular information. The clear textual and visual arrangement of links creates clarity on the homepage.

One cannot really make out if Kenya One Tours addresses a certain target group in particular. But when having a look at the activities listed below the main part of the homepage, it soon becomes apparent that rather adventurous and even cultural tourists are attracted by the tourism website.

The general impression of this homepage is rather positive due to the graphic design of the main part, that is the graphic of different pictures with brief links given below in the top centre of the page. The homepage does not have an overloading effect what is advantageous for inexperienced users.

This homepage also refers to warm colours implementing the typical idea of Kenya. The background colour is yellow and the body text colour is brown, except for the links kept in blue. Using a dark colour for the text relative to the light-coloured background is a good contrast achieving high readability.

The graphic in the main part of the homepage shows four typical impressions of Kenya giving an introduction to African experience, and emphasising the fact that this tourism website presents a particular country, Kenya. Another graphic, the symbol of the Kenya Association of Tour Operators, is added below the links indicating that Kenya One Tours is an official member of the association. Users, relying on the creditability of tourist guides, may assume that this tourism website provides qualified information from experienced tour operators.

Kenya One Tours has chosen the sans-serif typeface Arial, which is recommended regarding readability. The body text appears in a font size of 14 pixel ensuring that reading is agreeable for the user. The head and the logo, appearing in a much larger font

size, that is 18 pixel for the head and 36 pixel for the logo, are emphasised. The use of pixel to indicate font sizes causes the same problems as the use of points. Some browsers are not able to change the font size, what lowers usability. (cf. chapter 3.3.1)

As already mentioned before, Kenya One Tours offers less information than Magical Kenya or Kenya Travel Ideas. Due to a manageable amount of information the number of links is restricted to 8. The links are arranged in two lines one below the other. They all appear in the commonly used colour for links, that is blue. Moving the cursor to the link, it appears underlined. On the left below the main part, there are some more links taking the user to other websites. As they are not placed in the main part of the homepage, these links do not distract from the most important information provided by Kenya One Tours.

Navigation is kept simple by the small number of links. Clicking on the link activates the link that takes the user to the information. The principle of hierarchical navigation is here realised, going from the general information on the homepage to specific information, divided into sub categories, on the following pages. A “Home” link facilitating navigation is indicated on each web page of Kenya One Tours' website. The homepage does not have a site map, but such a means of orientation is dispensable for this website due to its little information quantity in comparison to the previous samples.

The user cannot search for particular information if he wants to because a search option does not exist on the website. The search for specific information will then take more time, which reduces usability.

The user has the possibility to communicate with a responsible person by writing an e-mail whose contact address is to be found behind the link “About Us”. The user can even learn what customers, tourists, of this Kenyan company have experienced. Nevertheless, a forum, where users can exchange their opinions and ideas on a particular issue, would be more interactive.

3.3.4 Evaluation of Website Samples

After having analysed three sample homepages, this chapter shall sum up the evaluation of the three samples by picking up the most important criteria providing website usability. Table 2 presents these elements and their implementation on the website samples.

The first criterion in the table considers the general impression of the homepage, which aims at evaluating how the homepage's design and layout, uniting screen elements and content, is perceived by the user at first glance. The user's overall impression of a website is a crucial point because his impression is decisive for the choice between visiting the website again and leaving it immediately.

Information quantity mainly refers to the screen elements on the homepage indicating the amount of information. As different users with different preferences, even among cultural tourists, visit a website, a broad offer of information should be presented on the homepage. (cf. chapter 2.5.3) In his four conversational maxims, the philosopher Paul Grice²⁰ has also included the maxim of quantity. He proposes to be as informative as it is required for a particular purpose, but, at the same time, not to be more informative than required. (cf. Grady/Warner 2006) Achieving a “proper” balance of information quantity, i.e. offering not too much and not too less, is a crucial point.

Information editing sums up the way how content is visually presented including the existence and the formulation of headlines. Headlines are a means to direct the user to the information he is looking for. He shall be attracted by visually highlighted headlines standing out from the text. The formulation of headlines is as important as their visual presentation, since the user wants to imagine what kind of information is to be expected by just scanning the homepage. Suitable information editing avoids that the user must read the whole text just to figure out which information comes next. (cf. chapter 2.5.3)

The next criterion, colours, examines if the chosen colours on the website do match. Too many colours may distract the user from the actual information and evoke an disturbing effect. Tourism websites on Kenya as a means to communicate holiday feeling and the Kenyan culture can consciously make use of colours to emphasise these

²⁰ Paul Grice is particularly best known for his innovative work in philosophy of language. His four proposed conversational maxims are Quantity (Information), Quality (Truth), Relation (Relevance) and Manner (Clarity). cf. Grady/Warner 2006.

ideas in order to evoke the user's typical associations with Kenya. Colours, one design issue, function well as visual signs referring to something that is interpreted by the interpreter, the user. (cf. chapter 2.2) The communication of Kenyan culture is not only implemented by graphics, but also by colours. Furthermore, the choice of colours contributes to the website's recognition value.

Graphics and animation refer here to their “proper” amount and their appropriate use with regard to the function of supporting the user's perception of information. The use of illustrations clearly enriches the look of a website, provided that graphics are reasonably added to show real content, and that they match with the whole layout. Photos should be edited suitably for the display size, as “overly detailed photos and drawings don't convey information and look cluttered” (Nielsen/Tahir 2002: 22). Animation has to be prudently applied on homepages due to the problem of possibly drawing the user's attention from other elements.

The following criterion, links, considers their ordering and categorising on the homepage, a fundamental criterion to fulfil website usability. In order to ensure a fast search for particular information on the website, it is recommendable to place important links in the main part of the homepage without being forced to scroll down the page. Links have to be immediately recognised as such by the prospective tourist, looking for just a small part of information. Website makers should pay attention on not just placing one link below the other, but on rather sequencing them logically. A well considered denomination of links, i.e. bearing the information-carrying word, is decisive for usability, too. (cf. chapter 2.5.3)

Navigation examines the fact if the user's demand for orientation with the help of navigation clues is respected. Navigation ideally supports the user's search for specific information and avoids getting lost on the website. Links help the user to navigate through the website, getting from one page to another. Providing means to find information as fast as possible as well as the way back to the starting point, desirable to allow user-friendliness, is the key for successful navigation and should be clearly indicated.

Clarity stands for the visual appearance of a website. Visual elements, such as layout, use of colours, typography, and persistent navigation influence the user's impression of website credibility. The textual and visual arrangement of information offered on the

homepage is user-friendly in the way that it makes navigation easier. If the user misses the aspect of clarity on a homepage, then he will certainly turn his back on that website and visit others.

The last point, consistency, applies to the consistent layout of every page on the website in order to ensure the site's recognition value and to facilitate the user's navigation process through the whole web appearance. The consistency of visual presentation is the key to usability.

The following evaluation of the three tourism homepage samples will be based on a point system distributing points from “0” to “4”. Four points present here “very good”, three points “good”, two points “moderate”, one point refers to “adequate” and 0 points stand for “inadequate”.

Table 2: Usability of Samples

4 = very good 3 = good 2 = moderate 1 = adequate 0 = inadequate

Criteria	Magical Kenya	Kenya Travel Ideas	Kenya1 Tours
General Impression	4	2	3
Information Quantity	4	3	2
Information Editing	4	2	3
Colours	3	4	4
Graphics and Animation	3	4	4
Links	4	1	4
Navigation	4	2	4
Clarity	4	2	4
Consistency	4	4	4
All	34	24	32

The website classification into three groups according to different organisation has already revealed the varied ways of presenting tourism information, i.e. the heterogeneous web design. Having selected one website out of each group for a more or less detailed analysis, it can be safely stated that some websites may be appealing at first sight, but less attractive after further analysis. The evaluation of the three sample analyses did not bring about a clear winner. It should be emphasised again that the evaluation of the samples did not aim at nominating one “perfect” tourism website, but rather at evaluating the different aspects of hypertext usability including the website's individual strengths and weaknesses.

3.4 Cultural Analysis of Samples

This chapter tries to investigate how cultural differences and borders are treated in order to make the prospective tourist familiar with the different cultural habits and customs, and how culture is communicated on tourism websites. This attempt will be realised by applying a semiotic approach on the field of culture. Semiotics is employed to examine how certain things are represented to create certain effects. In chapter 2.2, with reference to Stockinger (2001), signs have been defined as information-loaded objects such as texts, pictures, or graphics, as well as different social activities. When thinking of Kenya, or Africa, different stereotyped ideas certainly come to mind like vast savannah grasslands, wild animals, and men hunting with bow and arrow.

It is necessary to scrutinise in which context pictures are set and which meaning they convey. They often serve as decoration, representation, and information. Pictures, on the one hand, are a means to support the decoding of messages which cannot be encoded by the recipient due to poor linguistic skills, and, on the other hand, to fulfil the recipient's stereotyped idea of a particular country. Semioticians often distinguish between *icons*, *symbols*, and *indexes*. *Icons* as signs refer to something or someone which it resembles. *Symbols* are signs that communicate particular meaning through conventions. Certain symbolic signs exist for certain concepts and mean what they mean. *Indexes* are signs that do not have a real existing referee. For example, a picture of a mermaid does not have a referee in reality. (cf. Wrobel 2003: 30-32)

How signs with symbolic codes affect recipients depends on their perception ability. Perception then again is shaped by the recipient's culture determined by conventions. In web communication the recipients are able to gather what is meant by means of choice of colours, screen layout, and design in general. As recipients involve culturally diversified people, websites always try to encode information clearly. But the producer's codes may even differ from the recipient's codes within one culture as a result of individual knowledge and experience. In this case, recipients are internet users who specifically or accidentally visit the website. (cf. Wrobel 2003: 39-41)

3.4.1 Sample Group I: Magical Kenya

The tourist guide *Magical Kenya* offers a great variety and quantity of information about cultural Kenyan habits and Kenyan customs. The homepage uses many pictures communicating cultural phenomena of that particular country. Most pictures containing cultural information are here iconic signs bearing a close resemblance to the object they refer to. Photographs of typical animals in Kenya, a lion and hippos, evoke certain ideas of the African country. Symbols are also used to communicate Kenyan culture. On the top left of the homepage just above the links, the user can recognise a symbol denoting the Kenyan flag. It certainly depends on the user's individual knowledge if he is able to identify this symbol. Another symbolic sign is indicated on the right, which is an illustration of a map of Africa. The shape of the map clearly connotes the African continent.

An analysis of the web page one finds behind the link “Modern Culture” will furthermore show how culture is here communicated to the user. Since tourist guides are informative, and since they serve as promotion for a specific country or region, it is interesting to investigate how this role is implemented here. The text “Modern Culture” is written in an informal register and in a descriptive form by dividing general information about Kenyan culture into several paragraphs. A clear structure helps the reader to follow the different information on Kenyan culture. A cultural tourist interested in information on specific or unique cultural aspects concerning the country is here particularly addressed. The user’s attention is attracted to the diversity and melting of new and old cultures, which defines the modern culture of Kenya. With the help of

adverbs, such as truly and purely, the fact that its culture has become purely Kenyan is emphasised. Its unique character is highlighted by mentioning the possibility of experiencing the modern business city of Nairobi and, at the same time, the wilderness where people live in accordance with tradition. A picture of Nairobi added left to the paragraph emphasises the existence of two different worlds within the country, on the one hand, the large cities marked by business and technology and, on the other hand, the traditional life apart from technology. The user is able to read the sign by interpreting the coded reference referring to an object. It is obvious that the picture illustrates a big, modern business city, as multi-storey buildings, the coded reference, can be seen.

Furthermore, stereotypes²¹ always associated with Kenya are mentioned as well. One typical cliché is that of the Maasai people with their distended earlobes that is even highlighted by a picture. Most people are familiar with that image of Kenya. The use of such pictures communicates advertising messages plausibly and persuasively, since the user's own values and ideas are fulfilled and confirmed. What becomes quite obvious after having had a closer look at the information on this website is the fact that positive characteristics of Kenya surely outweigh the negative ones. Only the positive facts defining the culture of Kenya are mentioned in the text. Of course, tourist guides want to purchase something and that can be best done by promoting the country.

Stereotyped ideas of Kenya in persuasive texts, here tourism websites, are certainly consciously adopted in order to increase the website's recognition value. According to Wrobel (2003: 46), stereotypes usually reflect the knowledge and experience of a particular community. This knowledge is not only acquired through own experience, but to a large extent through texts in the broader sense, in this case through websites. Knowledge is accepted in the cultural context without further verification. Such a fixed idea or image that many users have of Kenya is not always true in reality. People tend to compare other cultures with their own culture, which is taken for superior to other cultures. "If stereotypes are hardy, it is not because they contain a grain of truth but rather because they express and reflect the culture of those who espouse them." (Carrol, qtd. in *ibid.*: 46)

21 Stereotypes refer here to fixed ideas or images that many people have of a particular country or culture, but which are not always true in reality.

The third picture, added left to the last two paragraphs, is too detailed for the small size. It would be better if the photo could be zoomed in order to get a better impression of what is reproduced in the photo. It conveys a large group of Kenyans dancing around a hoisted flag. Nevertheless, the user's image of that country is again confirmed by the use of those pictures.

3.4.2 Sample Group II: Kenya Travel Ideas

For the next cultural analysis of tourism websites, the Kenya Travel Ideas homepage will once again be the centre of interest. As the website analysis in chapter 3.3.2 has already worked out, the use of particular colours and pictures, iconic signs, transmit Kenyan culture on this homepage. Colours are a means to shape the web design. Their effect on the user are decisive in order to make him visit the website again. Evoking certain associations, colours convey messages, and therefore reflect a particular culture. The homepage is sensitive to the cultural meanings of colour in relation to the promoted country. The colour red is, in fact, a colour that visually pushes itself forward because it is a warm colour. In marketing red is deliberately used to evoke the user's attention in order to increase the promotional impact. Red has had a special effect on human beings since primitive times. (cf. Bartel 2003: 48) Many cultures even associate that colour with blood. For Kenyans, red is one of the four colours that is to be found in their flag, representing there the blood shed in the fight for independence.

Kenya therefore is also culturally connected with the colour red. But what does the reddish-brown colour used for the Kenya Travel Ideas website evoke in the user? For him, this background colour certainly brings different associations to mind, such as Kenya's natural surrounding. Most of us will think of the reddish-brown soil of some regions of that country. That particular choice of colours induces the typical picture of Kenya with its vast nature.

Besides the colour red, light yellow is also used for the background. Yellow creates a positive, luminous feeling by mainly associating it with the light and the sun. But it is also the colour of nature, as yellow is the most common colour of flowers. (cf. *ibid.*: 72) The warm colours reddish-brown and yellow stand both for Kenya's gorgeous nature.

The homepage uses four pictures supporting the user in their demand for grasping the idea of Kenya. These iconic signs represent typical African animals, such as a lion, an elephant, and antelopes, as well as African landscape. At the same time, these icons have symbolic codes that convey a certain meaning. The picture of a lion, an elephant, and antelopes convey the conventional meaning of Kenya.

3.4.3 Sample Group III: Kenya1Tours

The logo kept in brown, or rather reddish-brown, is here particularly highlighted by its size and its place in the centre of the page. In the background, just behind the logo, four pictures are grouped around the slogan “Kenya1Tours – Jump into a new adventure”. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the brown colour refers again to the soil in Kenya.

Kenya One Tours takes up typical associations with Kenya. In its logo, it uses a symbolic sign to denote an elegant, slender antelope, a typical widely-spread animal in Africa. The pictures grouped around the website's slogan are iconic signs representing giraffes, houses, a black African man, and a mountain. The user is either able to decode the messages of these signs or not.

The user's perception ability depends, on the one hand, on his culture which is shaped by conventions and, on the other hand, on his individual knowledge about other cultures. Grasping the message, the user will probably recognise the ideas of the pictures, each of them representing Kenyan culture. That user will identify Kenya's broad variety of culture distinguished by people, animals, and landscape. The user's conventional knowledge about Kenya makes him catch the stereotyped ideas behind these iconic signs.

The illustration of giraffes represents a large part of Kenya's wildlife. The picture of the black African stands for a Kenyan inhabitant who belongs to one of the numerous Kenyan tribes. The houses in the countryside represent traditional Kenya housing, such as round beehive-like huts. The mountain in the last picture is probably Mount Kenya, the second highest mountain in the country. The user certainly recognises at first glance that this tourism website promotes Kenya because his stereotyped ideas of that country are displayed on the homepage. Kenya's cultural and natural diversity is communicated

by several signs in form of illustrations.

The choice of a light yellow background together with the brown font colour on the homepage reflects Kenya's nature. The colour yellow refers to the beautiful savannah landscape. These colours likewise evoke certain associations with Kenya from the user.

3.5 Usability Statistics

This chapter will concentrate on a quantitative usability analysis of tourism websites. In this statistics, 30 websites have been analysed with regard to their usability. In their book on homepage usability, Nielsen and Tahir (2002) evaluated 50 homepages. Therefore, they established a homepage design statistics giving information about the usability of the 50 selected homepages. I will adopt some of their investigated design conventions in order to examine how these are realised on the homepages or web pages of the 30 tourism websites. Please note that some samples of the analysis do not represent the “general” homepage, which is the start page of the whole Internet appearance, but rather the start page for the particular country Kenya. For the usability study of the 30 samples, the homepages of tourism websites that exclusively consider Kenya have been included, and, for the general tourism websites²², the web pages of that particular country have been implied.

3.5.1 Page Layout

In this chapter, I had a look at the size of the homepages on the screen and studied if a search feature was provided, where it was placed, and how it was called. Table 3 shows that 27% of the websites presented their content on more than three computer screens. In order to keep the scroll potential of a page as low as possible, the page length should be limited at maximum to three screens.(cf. chapter 2.5.3) Too much scrolling could be very annoying. The majority of the samples was within the recommended range of page length.

²² Tourist guides that do not specifically focus on one country, e.g. Kenya, but rather on many different African countries or on countries from all over the world.

Table 3: Page Length

Page Length	Percentage
About 1 screen	13%
About 2 screens	30%
About 3 screens	30%
More than 3 screens	27%

It is unbelievable that 30% of the web pages did not offer a search function.²³ Almost all websites, 81%, represented search as a box with a white text field in which the user can type what he is searching for. As this design is most frequently used, it is strongly recommended. According to Nielsen and Tahir's (2002: 41) user testing, the representation of search as a box works best. The majority, 58%, placed the search function in the upper right or upper left. Placing the search feature in the upper part of the homepage is of advantage because there it is noticeable for the user.

Table 4: Search Placement

Search Placement	Percentage
Upper left	29%
Upper right	29%
Upper centre	24%
Other position	19%

Different terms were used to mark the search box or search link. Table 5 presents different labels. The most frequently used term for search was "Search". From a usability perspective, the word "Search" is clear and easy to understand, and therefore defines this feature best.

²³ For this part of the analysis, only the 21 websites that offered a search function have been considered.

Table 5: Search Label

Search Label	
Search	71%
Go	4%
Destination Search	5%
Trip Search	5%
Find	5%

3.5.2 Graphics and Animation

The median number of pictures on the homepage was 3. There was only one website that did not have any picture on its homepage. 40% of the websites included some form of animation on the homepage. This quite high percentage shows that animation is frequently used on websites. The use of multimedia on websites can contribute to an illustrative, interesting, and authentic look. Nevertheless, animation quite often annoys the user and distracts him from his actual search. The majority of the website samples, however, did not use any animation on their homepage. As the homepage is only a start page of an Internet appearance giving the user some orientation what is to be found on the website, animation is better omitted on the homepage.

Only two tourism websites, or 7%, of the samples used music to communicate particular information. Both websites provided a music file of the national anthem of Kenya enabling the user to listen to one small part of Kenyan culture.

3.5.3 Typography

In this part of analysis, the body text, background colours, font sizes and font styles as well as the link formatting have been studied. Of the 30 homepages studied, 73% used black for the bodytext. The majority of these sites, that is 16 out of 22, chose white as the background colour. With this combination, the homepages achieved the maximum contrast and, hence, the highest readability. 10% used the colour blue for the bodytext, mostly on a white background.

Table 6: Body Text and Background Colours

Colours (Body Text, Background Colour)	Percentage
Black on white	53%
Black on yellow	10%
Black on beige	10%
Black on grey	7%
Blue on white	7%
Blue on yellow	3%
Brown on white	3%
Purple on white	3%
Yellow on black	3%

The evaluation of font sizes is rather difficult, since the font sizes on a website are never predictable due to their dependence on monitor size, screen resolution, browser settings, and operating systems. In order to elude these user-specific problems in this usability study, the interest is here laid on the use of absolute or relative font sizes.

I studied the source codes of all 30 websites to find out if absolute fonts or relative fonts have been set. As mentioned in chapter 3.3.1, relative font sizes are user-friendlier than absolute ones. The relative indication allows the user to change the font size according to his preferences, no matter which browser he uses.

Of the 30 tourism websites studied, 15 (50%) sites used relative font sizes. The other 15 websites indicated absolute font sizes in their source codes. In his readability guidelines, Nielsen (2002a) recommends to let the user control font size. Considering website usability, I also suggest using relative font sizes to allow the user to change the size according to his preferences.

Almost all body text appeared in a sans-serif font. Only 7% of the website samples used a serif typeface, comprising small lines at the end of letters. Sans-serif fonts denoting fonts without serifs are typefaces such as Arial, Verdana, or Helvetica. For printed works, serif typefaces are recommended. As sans-serif typefaces are easier to read on low-resolution computer screens, most website prefer using fonts without serifs.

Coloured text to indicate links was the favourite cue. 57% of the websites indicated links in the very common colour blue. The second-most important cue is underlining links, as the user immediately recognises that the text is clickable.

Of the 30 samples, 50% underlined their links. As Nielsen and Tahir (2002) state in their book, it is not necessary to underline links in the navigation bar because it is obvious for the user where he can activate a link. They also speak of blue as “the traditional standard for link colours” (ibid.: 51). Only 13% of the homepages used black links. Since the user is habituated to look for coloured text in order to surf the page, black links are less recommended.

In this study, 33% of the homepages changed the colour for visited links what helps the user to differentiate information that he has already read from information he maybe still wants to read.

3.5.4 Communication and Interactivity

The last part of the usability statistics considered navigation and contact information. From a usability perspective, navigation provided by different navigation schemes and navigation tools is a crucial element. Table 7 presents five navigation schemes and their use in percentages. The left-hand navigation scheme was the most used scheme in the study. The numbers in the table add up to more than 100% because some homepages presented two possibilities of navigation. The use of tabs and right-hand navigation was the second-most scheme. Some homepages also presented links on the left as well as on the right side of the page. Offering left-hand and right-hand navigation on one homepage can be useful to limit the length of a page. This possibility avoids a too high scroll potential.

Table 7: Navigation Scheme

Navigation Scheme	Percentage
Left-hand navigation	47%
Right-hand navigation	33%
Tabs	27%
Categories in middle of page	20%
Links across top of page	17%

A very useful navigation tool is a site map, which gives the user an overview of the website's content. Only 40% of the sites studied offered a site map. Some websites probably did not provide a link to a site map because they are manageable due to its modest quantity of content. 75% of the sites offering a site map simply called it “Site Map”. The three remaining websites labelled this feature “Site Tour”, “Main Menu”, or “Navigation”.

In the sample, 90% of the websites provided a feature to contact the company or organisation. Contact information was typically offered by giving an address, a telephone number, and an email address. Among these websites, the user found the contact information as follows:

Table 8: Placement of Contact

Placement of Contact	Percentage
On the homepage	15%
Available through Contact (Us) Link	52%
Available through About (Us) Link	19%
Others (e.g. Company, Main Menu)	15%

Most websites used a “Contact” or a “Contact Us” link to provide contact information for the user. This way is strongly recommended because this allows the user to immediately figure out how he can contact the company or organisation.

Table 9: Label of Contact

Label of Contact	Percentage
Contact Us	56%
Contact	22%
Contact <email address>	4%
Others	6%

3.5.5 Observation and Evaluation

The usability statistics of all 30 tourism website samples considered different important features affecting usability. In this study, it was observed that, with regard to page layout, a big majority presents their content within the recommended page length of one computer screen to, at most, three screens. Keeping page length within limits is a crucial aspect from a usability point of view, otherwise the user might be bored and even annoyed of being forced to scroll down the website just to figure out its content. A quite large number of websites does not offer a search function, what hinders the user's demand for searching the website for particular information. This quite useful means facilitates the user's process of surfing the Internet to find the information he is looking for. It can be stated that the use of graphics on websites is very popular. On average, the number of pictures on the homepages is restricted to 3. Only a minority includes animation on the homepage. Though being illustrative, only a limited number of pictures and animation on the homepage is recommended, since they often do not function as they are supposed to and rather miss the website's aim by distracting the user from the actual information. Unfortunately, the selected tourism websites still rarely make use of audio files, an effective means of communicating culture.

It was found that black body text on a white background is the most frequently offered colour scheme on websites. Black on white, the maximum contrast, achieves the highest possible readability, and hence, supports usability. Furthermore, in the study, there has neither been a preference for relative font sizes nor for absolute ones. Nevertheless, from a usability perspective, the use of user-friendlier relative font sizes allowing the user to change the font size of websites according to their needs is preferable. Almost all body text appears in a sans-serif typeface increasing the reading comfort on low-resolution computer screens, which demonstrates that typefaces without serifs are preferably used in web design. Most websites indicate links appearing in the body text in blue, which is the most common colour for unvisited links. Underlining links is almost used as frequently as blue links. As this way of indicating links is still the most established one, it is recommended to apply it likewise on tourism websites.

Considering Communication and Interactivity, it can be stated that left-hand navigation is clearly favoured. As the user's eye moves from left to right in order to

perceive the website's content, navigation on the left, being immediately noticed by the reader, is there well positioned. Only the majority of the websites studied offers a site map as navigation tool. Although a site map may be a real help for the user to inform himself about the content and about the way the latter is provided by the website, it is unnecessary for those websites providing a relative small quantity of information, and thus, being easier to handle.

Almost all samples provided a feature to contact the owner of the website. Giving an address, a telephone number, and an email address is the common form of presenting contact information. Contact allows the user to communicate interactively by asking questions, coming up with suggestions, or even making complaints.

4 Conclusion

In this MA thesis, hypertext usability and cultural communication of tourism websites on Kenya have been examined. Therefore, three sample websites out of 30 have been evaluated and compared with each other with regard to their usability. The evaluation has consisted of two parts, based, on the one hand, on assessment criteria for website usability, and, on the other hand, on a semiotic analysis of culture. It was first necessary to delimit *text* from *hypertext* in order to contrast then traditional tourist guides with online tourist guides, or tourism websites, and to specify a target user group in consideration of a cultural analysis.

Three sample analyses served as so-called “prototypes” for a qualitative evaluation of tourism websites with reference to hypertext usability and cultural transmission. All 30 website samples have been then quantitatively analysed and summarised in a usability statistics. The website evaluation has been based on assessment criteria modelled after Eva-Maria Jakobs' (2005) reflections on evaluation approaches for websites and Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir's (2002) homepage usability guidelines. (cf. chapter 2.5.2) These assessment criteria have been divided into three main parts: Information, Design and Layout, and Communication and Interactivity.

It was found that, with regard to usability, the needs of users of tourism websites are much the same as the needs of users of other websites. Having compared three homepage samples with each other, it was detected that these websites greatly differ from another in many respects.

Magical Kenya offering by far the largest amount of information in comparison with its two competitors achieved the best result in the evaluation of the three sample tourism websites. Kenya One Tours cannot measure up with Magical Kenya and Kenya Travel Ideas concerning information quantity. A cultural tourist searching for a large amount of detailed information on cultural Kenya would probably prefer Magical Kenya or Kenya Travel Ideas. Though Kenya Travel Ideas provides much information, it is inferior to the other samples regarding information editing.

All three samples present their homepages in colours that match well. The careful choice of colours does not only support the content and affect the layout positively but even communicate a part of Kenyan culture.

In general, all websites offered a “proper” number of pictures, making the homepages look more illustrative, and thus, interesting. Magical Kenya does not get full marks here, as its competitors do, because of its large animated graphics of advertising affecting the user's perception of important information negatively. Too many and too large graphics on homepages might not effect as they are supposed to, but might rather distract the reader from main information.

Kenya Travel Ideas' organisation of links is far behind the clear arrangement of links on Magical Kenya and on Kenya One Tours due to its lack of sequencing. From a usability perspective, the list of links, where no item is particularly emphasised to show meaningful relationships between similar items, is much too long. Consequently, the lack of categorised links lowers the ease of navigation on Kenya Travel Ideas' homepage. Magical Kenya solves the problem by dividing its links into several parts and listing similar items in one group. Navigation is kept simple on Kenya One Tours' homepage due to its poor information quantity, which helps the user easily find his way through the website. Good navigation allows the user to autonomously choose his own path according to his preferences and is, hence, the key to interactivity.

As already mentioned in the Introduction, this MA thesis does not aim at appointing the best website. As the usability criteria within the website samples crucially depend on the user's preferences, it is difficult to objectively tell which is the best out of the three websites analysed. However, it was found that Magical Kenya, taking all criteria into account, is the website with the highest usability score. It surpasses its two competitors in general impression, information quantity, and navigation. This online tourist guide stands out from the others due to the homepage's very appealing and overwhelming general impression, its large amount of varied information about Kenya, and its well-defined and well-organised links that, at the same time, allow the ease of navigation.

Though Kenya Travel Ideas offers its users much information on Kenya, its usability is, however, lowered by weak information editing, unstructured links, and a high scroll potential. Kenya One Tours is only inferior to Magical Kenya and Kenya Travel Ideas concerning its amount of information. In comparison with its two competitors, this homepage, indeed, offers less information.

Kenya One Tours, nevertheless, ranks second because of its good general impression, its use of colours and graphics, its well-organised, concise links ensuring good navigation, and because of its clarity, that allows the user to easily utilise the website. It certainly will serve inexperienced users, who might not be able to cope with too many options, best. But from a cultural tourist's perspective, Magical Kenya will definitely satisfy the user's needs most.

The evaluation has substantiated that Web design is an effective tool to visually communicate culture. The conscious use of colours supports and accentuates the information presented on a website. The user is able to understand what is meant with the help of colours and the website layout. Certain colours are associated with certain terms, feelings and situations, emphasising the principal topic of the website. In this thesis, a particular country distinctly different from European culture, has been the websites' focus.

It can be stated that the use of iconic signs, pictures, representing stereotyped ideas of Kenya are certainly consciously adopted in order to fulfil the user's stereotyped expectations of that particular country and to increase the website's recognition value. Moreover, iconic signs and also symbolic signs are a means to support the decoding of messages, and therefore, make tourism websites serve as a means to communicate culture.

On the whole, Shneiderman's golden rules of hypertext (cf. chapter 2.4) meet well with tourist guides. Tourist guides are certainly suited for hypertext by fulfilling a cultural tourist's demand for reading just a small part of the large body of information. This form of communication offers access to information transmission, and equally, to cultural communication.

In conclusion, there is a high probability that tourists who are looking for just a fraction of information on a particular country will consult tourism websites more frequently than their equivalents in print because of their easy, quick, and almost unlimited access of information, and because of their multimedia features that make online tourist guides much more appealing.

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Magisterarbeit untersucht die Anwendbarkeit von Hypertext auf Reiseführer und deren Vermittlung von Kultur am Beispiel Kenyas. Dafür wurden willkürlich 30 Online-Reiseführer ausgesucht, die hinsichtlich der Bedienbarkeit von Websites analysiert wurden. Heutzutage verbringen wir immer mehr Zeit vor dem Bildschirm, so dass Anbieter von Websites viel Wert auf die Bedienbarkeit ihres Internetauftritts legen. Da Websites auch eine Form von Kommunikation darstellen, stellt sich die Frage, wie auf Tourismus-Websites Kultur vermittelt wird.

Die Arbeit besteht aus zwei Hauptteilen, einem Theorieteil und einem praktischen Teil. Im Theorieteil standen begriffliche Definitionen von Kultur und Kultursemiotik, die Gegenüberstellung der Konzepte Text und Hypertext, sowie der Vergleich von traditionellen Reiseführern in Form eines Buches mit Online-Reiseführern im Vordergrund.

Der praktische Teil beschäftigte sich mit der Analyse der Websites. Die Bewertung basierte einerseits auf Bewertungskriterien für die Bedienbarkeit von Websites und andererseits auf einer kultursemiotischen Analyse. Die 30 Websites wurden hinsichtlich ihrer Anordnung der Informationen auf der Homepage in drei verschiedene Klassifizierungsgruppen geteilt. Drei Websites, die jeweils eine der drei Gruppen repräsentieren, wurden zunächst qualitativ analysiert und bewertet. Den Abschluss der Arbeit bildete eine quantitative Analyse der Bedienbarkeit der Homepages aller 30 Websites, die in einer Statistik festgehalten wurde. Die Website-Analysen basierten auf von mir ausgewählten Kriterien für die Bewertung von Tourismus-Websites. Bei der Zusammenstellung der Bewertungskriterien habe ich mich auf Eva-Maria Jakob's Bewertungsansätze (2005) sowie auf Jakob Nielsen und Marie Tahir's (2002) Richtlinien für Homepages bezogen. Diese Kriterien gliedern sich in folgende drei Hauptgruppen: Information, Design und Layout, sowie Kommunikation und Interaktivität.

In dieser Arbeit wurde herausgefunden, dass in Hinblick auf die Bedienbarkeit von Websites die Bedürfnisse der Internetnutzer von Online-Reiseführern und die Bedürfnisse von Nutzern anderer Websites sich im Großen und Ganzen ähneln. Bei der Analyse und Bewertung der drei Homepages kam heraus, dass sich diese in vieler Hinsicht stark voneinander unterscheiden.

Der Reiseführer „Magical Kenya“ erreichte im Vergleich mit den zwei Vertretern der anderen Websitekategorien in der Punkteverteilung das beste Ergebnis. Da die Bewertung von Websites immer von den Vorlieben des Nutzers beeinflusst wird, ist es nur schwer möglich, objektiv zu entscheiden, welche Website von den drei detaillierten Analysen die beste ist. Wenn man jedoch alle Kriterien berücksichtigt, ist „Magical Kenya“ die Website mit der höchsten Punktzahl und wäre somit der Sieger. Ziel dieser Arbeit war es jedoch nicht, den besten Online-Reiseführer zu ermitteln, sondern Stärken und Schwächen der einzelnen Websites herauszuarbeiten und zu zeigen, dass die Anwendung von Hypertext auf Reiseführer von großem Vorteil ist.

Die Website „Magical Kenya“ übertrifft ihre zwei „Konkurrenten“ auf Grund ihres sehr ansprechenden Gesamteindrucks, ihres großen, vielseitigen Informationsangebots, sowie ihrer eindeutig, präzise formulierten und übersichtlich angeordneten Links, was dem Nutzer die Bedienbarkeit dieser Website erleichtert. Der Reiseführer „Kenya Travel Ideas“ bietet dem Nutzer zwar ebenfalls viele Informationen über Kenya, aber schwache Aufbereitung der Informationen, unstrukturierte Links und vieles Scrollen trübt den Gesamteindruck und bringt „Kenya Travel Ideas“ somit nur auf den dritten Platz, hinter „Magical Kenya“ und „Kenya One Tours“. „Kenya One Tours“ ist seinen zwei Konkurrenten nur hinsichtlich der Informationsquantität unterlegen. Diese Website erreichte durch ihren guten Gesamteindruck, ihrer wohl bedachten Farbwahl und Verwendung von Bildern, ihren gut organisierten und präzise formulierten Links, die gleichzeitig eine leichte Bedienbarkeit ermöglichen, punktemäßig den zweiten Platz. „Kenya One Tours“ bedient sicherlich unerfahrene Internetnutzer, die möglicherweise mit zu vielen Funktionen überfordert wären, am besten. Die Bedürfnisse eines Kulturtouristen, der sich dadurch auszeichnet, dass sein primäres Reisemotiv die Kultur eines bestimmten Landes ist, werden jedoch sicherlich am besten mit „Magical Kenya“ befriedigt.

Die kulturelsemiotischen Analysen der drei Websites bewiesen, dass Webdesign ein wirksames Mittel ist, um visuell Kultur zu vermitteln. Bewusste Farbwahl unterstützt den Inhalt der Website und hebt ihn hervor. Farben und das Layout helfen dem Nutzer bei der Verarbeitung und Entschlüsselung der Information. Bestimmte Farben rufen beim Nutzer bestimmte Assoziationen hervor, die das zentrale Thema der Website unterstreichen.

Tourismus-Websites setzen stereotypisierte Vorstellungen in Form ikonischer Zeichen, Bilder, bewusst ein um die Klischeevorstellungen eines bestimmten Landes

des Nutzers zu bestätigen, und um somit den Wiedererkennungswert des Reiseführers zu erhöhen. Außerdem sind ikonische und symbolische Zeichen ein Mittel um Botschaften, d. h. Informationen, zu entschlüsseln. Sie unterstützen Kulturvermittlung auf Websites.

In dieser Arbeit stellte sich heraus, dass sich Ben Shneiderman's „Golden Rules“ für Hypertext in Reiseführern wiederfinden und sich Hypertext somit hier sehr gut anwenden lässt. Es kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass Kulturtouristen, eine besondere Zielgruppe, sich nur für einen bestimmten Teil des großen Informationsangebots eines Reiseführers interessieren, und sie folglich vom Vorteil der Anwendung von Hypertext auf Reiseführer profitieren. Websites sind eine besondere Form von Kommunikation, die den Nutzern Zugang zur Informationsübertragung sowie zur Kulturvermittlung bietet. Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass Touristen, die sich nur über einen Bruchteil der in Reiseführern angebotenen Informationen informieren möchten, in Zukunft häufiger Online-Reiseführer als deren gedruckte Ausführungen hinzuziehen werden. Der leichte, schnelle und nahezu unbegrenzte Zugang zu Informationen, sowie die multimediale Ausstattung macht Online-Reiseführer einfach attraktiver und interessanter.

Appendix I: Screenshots Group I

BZ's Kenya Travel Guide - Mozilla Firefox

Startseite | News | Links | Hotels in Kenya | Photos | Shopping | Travel Tips | Game Parks | Restaurants | Swahili Lesson | Books on Kenya | Forums

BZ's Kenya Travel Guide

Whether you are a first time traveler to Kenya or could be qualified as a GWH (Great White Hunter) this Kenya travel guide should have something to offer.

There are sections on [hotels](#) and [shopping](#) in Kenya as well as the best [game parks](#) and [restaurants](#). Make sure to check out the [books](#) on Kenya. For those looking for answers there are the [travel tips](#) and the [Kenya travel FAQ](#) which have loads of information.

Quick Facts on Kenya

- The capital of Kenya is Nairobi
- The government is a Republic
- The currency is the Kenya Shilling (KES)
- The official languages are English and Kiswahili so you might want a shot [Swahili lesson](#)

Kenya Background

The Republic of Kenya (Jamhuri ya Kenya) is located on the equator in East Africa. Kenya has an area of 224,961 square miles, slightly smaller than Texas with a population of 31,136,735 and growing. The capital is Nairobi holding a population of 2,200,000, seventy percent of which are African. Although English is the official language there are hundreds of different tribal dialects currently in use with [Swahili](#) being the most popular. Kenya is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and the Indian Ocean which provides some of the best beaches along Kenya's coast. Kenya's monetary unit is the internally controlled Kenyan Shilling which currently is exchanging for about 67 to every US dollar, or 90 to the Pound.

Kenyan Flag

Referenz(en)

- News
- Photos
- Travel Tips
- Swahili Lesson
- Travel Guide

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Visiting the Grand Canyon? Find articles, maps & trip ideas!
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Luxury Resorts On Islands, Beach & Outback. Luxury Travel Specialist!
[www.7hotels.com.au](#)

LondonTown.com - Hotels
75% off London Hotels with best price guarantee.
[www.LondonTown.com](#)

Travel Guide
Find travel guides, blogs and advice from thousands of travelers
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Kiev Plus City Guide
Visiting Kiev, Ukraine? Visit us first! We have all the information.
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Your complete guide to travel and worry free vacations. Free!
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Next Pope is John Paul II
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Go back in time to a place where time stood still. See to experience
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Follow your passions in Le Marche, choose what to do and where to stay
[www.paradisepossible.com](#)

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Your complete guide. Advice, info, news, mortgage tips
[www.expertadvice.com](#)

Nachrichten

- Mac's Join Masai Tribe 03.11.2006
- Melinda Atwood's Top 10 Tips 30.10.2006
- BZ's Kenya Travel Forums 05.10.2006
- BZ's Kenya Travel Guide Relaunches 13.06.2006
- Weitere Nachrichten

Sie sind hier: [Startseite](#) → [BZ's Kenya Travel Guide](#)

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Fig. 1: Bwana Zulia's Kenya Travel Guide

Mozilla Firefox

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Kenya



The Place

Kenya is a country of dramatic extremes and classic contrasts. Desert and alpine snow; forests, both lowland and montane; acacia woodlands and open plains; vast freshwater lakes and the superb coastline pounded by the Indian Ocean. Overall, it can be seen as almost the entire African continent in microcosm.

[Next Section](#) [Printable page](#)
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- ▶ The Place
- ▶ Vital Statistics
- ▶ Geography
- ▶ Climate
- ▶ People
- ▶ Highlights
- ▶ Public Holidays
- ▶ Getting There
- ▶ Getting Around
- ▶ Accommodation
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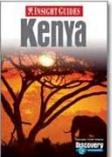


Fig. 2: Insight Guides

Kenya safari guide - Kenyalogy - Mozilla Firefox

Kenya safari guide est. 2000

KENYALOGY Kenya safari guide est. 2000

November 25, 2006
May 19, 2006

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- History
- Climate and vegetation
- Economy
- Population and culture
- Parks and reserves
- Wildlife

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- Kenya maps
- City maps
- Africa maps
- Antique maps

IMAGES

- Photo gallery
- Art gallery

PARTICIPATE

- The Waterhole (Forum)

STUFF

- The Kenyalogy Guide in PDF
- Books and more
- Wallpapers
- GPS waypoints

We are **>2,500,000** visitors since June 26, 2000

Traffic statistics

Kenyalogy is the internet's Kenya safari guide.
Here you will find the information you need for your journey to Kenya, hundreds of pages with travel useful facts to help you arrange your trip or simply to enjoy Kenya from home. Kenya's geography, history, maps, health and safety, parks and reserves, wildlife, pictures and art drawings, travel reports at our www forum, safari books & stuff, GPS waypoints and much more. Explore!

THE KENYALOGY GUIDE

- Useful facts**
Visas, vaccines, security, shopping, what to bring... All you need to know for your safari.
- Parks and reserves**
Extensive information about the major game parks, their wildlife and accommodation.
- Wildlife**
Get yourself closer to the premium state of the safari experience. Kenya's mammals and birds.
- History**
From the early hominids to the present day, including a bunch of crazy sportsmen.
- Climate**
Rain period or dry season? What's the weather like today? Know the climate and avoid surprises.
- The Kenyalogy Guide in PDF**
Grab The Kenyalogy Guide in electronic book printable format (PDF).

THE WATERHOLE

The Waterhole is the meeting point, the forum where you will find other travelers to exchange info, share experiences, solve any doubts, lend or ask for advice and everything you need. Come to drink.

IMAGES OF KENYA

- Photo gallery**
+200 pictures of animals, earth below their feet and sky above their heads. And the African light.
- Art gallery**
Portraits, landscapes, wildlife and compositions. Original sketches and paintings by Ana Gonzalez.

Some charities working in Kenya

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Enters the
Debate
KenGen
Shares Soar
in First Day of
Trading
Work to Lay
Sh4.2 Billion
Cable Begins
in June
CCK
Sweetens Its
Licence Offer
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Ruled Out in
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Fig. 3: Kenyalogy

Kenya Safaris, Tours and Travel, Kenya Safari - Mozilla Firefox

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Kenyaspace!

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Kenya Safaris
Kenya Travel

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Your Operations:

- Kenya Hotels:**
- Kenya Tours:**
- Kenya Kenya safaris:** Safaris in luxurious hotels.
- Kenya safaris for the disabled:** Safaris for the physically challenged.
- Executive safaris in Kenya:** Safaris for individual staff or company retreats.
- Self-drive safaris:** Safaris with intervals of self-drive.
- Family safaris in Kenya:** Camping in the many national parks and reserves.
- Kenya Hot air sports safaris:** Gliders, Deltas, ballooning and other water games.
- Kenya safari Organized:** For large groups of people who want to travel together.
- Mountain climbing safaris:** Climbing Mt Kenya or Mt Kilimanjaro.
- Ecological safaris:** For ecological studies or for those interested in nature.
- Research safaris in Kenya:** Study tours for those researching on an issue.
- Kenya Adventure safaris:** A combination of several of these safaris with flexibility in the guiding process.
- Cultural safaris in Kenya:** Mainly touring the cultural habitats of the Kenyan people like Kilimanjaro, Masai land etc.
- Wildlife tracking safaris in Kenya:** Track the giraffes.
- Kenya Business safaris:** When on business in Kenya, incorporate a small holiday by doing short of travel.
- Budget safaris:** These are for those who want to travel economically.
- Kenya Safari safaris:** Aerial view of the wildlife and landscape.
- Beach safaris:** Safaris concentrated mainly along the coastal beaches.
- Motor racing safaris:** Organized mainly around motor work racing safaris held in Kenya.

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Tanzania Safari
Everything you need to know about Safari in Tanzania.
www.AfricaTravelBusiness.com

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Kenya safaris are among the most exciting adventures the world over. The best wildlife, the many sunny beaches, the different people groups all add up to a worthwhile investment and a luxury not found in many places. Kenya safaris have proved to be a very popular tourist in the tourism sector. Following are some of the highlights of travel to Kenya.



Coast Safaris
Indian ocean coast of Kenya - This is one of the most popular tourist destination along Kenya's coastal border. It is situated in the famous Mombasa town and adjacent to towns such as Malindi, Lamu and others. It is here that you can engage in various water sports such as water polo, wind surfing, water skiing and snorkeling. Beach safaris to the coast are a sheer delight. You also get an opportunity to tour the coastal town of Mombasa. See our page on Kenya safaris for more information and details. Also known as beach safaris, these are the most popular and highly treasured of the Kenya expeditions.

Nairobi Safaris and Travel
Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya. While here, tours to various places of interest such as the National Museum, giraffe park, the animal orphanage, the maize park, and the ostrich farm can be arranged. There are just but a few of the places you should make a point of visiting. And of course, you must not but - try out the "Carnivore Experience" at the Carnivore hotel. The only dining of its kind in Africa!

Country Tours Safaris/Wildlife Safaris
While in Kenya Travel upcountry to the various sight seeing adventures where you will get a chance to tour several national parks and view Kenya's vast wildlife and rich cultural way of life. Learn about the various people groups, their cultures and traditions. Among the wildlife you will see in such Kenya safaris there includes lions, elephants, cheetah, wildbeest, tigers, buffaloes, zebras, giraffes - the list is endless!

In brief, Kenya is a major attraction for travellers to Africa. It is one of the finest and undoubtedly one of the most famous safari destinations in the world. Wildlife safari, however, is by no means the only reason to visit Kenya. The attractions of its rich culture and diverse environments are considerable.

Kenya lies along the equator. On the southeast is its coastal region and to the east lies Somalia. Ethiopia is to the north, Sudan to the northwest, and Uganda to the west. The southwestern border of the country is lined by Lake Victoria, and southward lies Tanzania. Kenya geography is spectacular and varied. While much of northeastern Kenya is a flat, bush-covered plain, the rest of the country comprises pristine beaches, scenic highlands and lake regions, the Great Rift Valley, and the magnificent Mount Kilimanjaro region of Kenya.

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Tanzania Safaris
All information on Tanzania Wildlife Adventures of a Lifetime!
TanzaniaSafaris.co.uk

African Safari Specialist
Tailor Made Kenya Safaris Expert Safari Advice at Great Price
www.africansafari.com

Seasonal Tours and Safaris
Travel statistics indicate that some seasons are more preferable than others. Kenya has a wide variety of climatic conditions although there are no great extremes. The temperate climate remains comfortably warm in most months except for a month or two when it can get very cold. Though nothing compared to Winter! Much of Kenya experiences heavy rainfall from March through May and, to a lesser extent, from October through December. The best season for most outdoor activities like safaris and mountain climbing is during the dry season (June-September). This is the most ideal time to travel to Kenya.

Kenya's People/Cultural Safaris
Kenya has known the presence of mankind since the very earliest development of known human species. Moreover, the region has for a long time been a migratory path, passed through by wave upon wave of peoples from all over Africa and later on from the Middle East. By the 10th century or thereabouts, the region had developed its own language (Swahili) which is a Bantu language which has borrowed heavily from Arabic.

Kenya's Rich Cultural History
The Portuguese arrived at the coastal region at the end of the 15th century and therefore the East African coastal region was dominated by Europeans for a long time. However, in 1729 the Portuguese were expelled and were replaced by two Arab dynasties, the Sabiri and the end of the 18th century, when Kenya came under the British sphere of influence. The country attained independence in 1963. Although it has experienced its share of internal and external strife, Kenya has in recent years made great strides in enhancing democracy and good government not just in the country but in Africa at large.

Kenya's population today stands at almost 30 million, 97 percent comprises people of African descent, though that group is composed of over 40 different tribal groups. Among the most significant are the Kikuyu, Luo, Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya, and Luo. Kenya's official language is English and Swahili is the national language. Tribal languages abound especially in the rural areas.

For more specific information, please send an email to [Travel](#)

Travel Time Zone: 5 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Useful travel links:
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Kenya Safaris

Sample Kenya Safaris

- Kenya Safari 1
- Kenya Safari 2
- Kenya Safari 3
- Kenya Safari 4
- Kenya Safari 5
- Kenya Safari 6
- Kenya Safari 7
- Kenya Safari 8
- Kenya Safari 9
- Kenya Safari 10
- Kenya Safari 11
- Kenya Safari 12

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Fig. 4: Kenyaspace

Kenya Travel Information | Lonely Planet Destination Guide - Mozilla Firefox

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Dangerous Clashes, Banditry
Bandits have been known to operate near Lamu, between Isiolo in Kenya and the Ethiopian border, and in Kenya's northwest, particularly border regions. Northeast Kenya should be avoided due to violent clashes between nomadic groups along the border and readers have reported trouble spots along the Kitale-Lodwar road.

Take care in Nairobi, particularly around River Rd and Uhuru Park which are notorious for muggings as are the beaches near Mombasa. Bear in mind that most encounters with the police are likely to end with money changing hands. Scams are common.

BLUELISTS
Check out what other travellers are saying about Kenya. Got a recommendation of your own? BlueList it >

	Journeys in Africa By: DWebb99 — 24 Jan 06	22 votes
	Safari, Sadism and Sanity By: cariemortleman — 13 Jan 06	199 votes

Factoid
Lethal Brew
Kenya has a long tradition of producing its own bootleg liquor, but you should steer well clear of *chang'a* or *kumi-kumi*. Tales about this demon drink abound: in November 2000, a batch of the brew laced with methanol killed more than 130 people and hospitalised 500 others. The drink Sorghum Bardi, from Central Province, is said to contain so much methyl alcohol that the bottles are actually cold to the touch! Perhaps the most dangerous *chang'a* comes from Kisii, and is made from substances as diverse as marijuana twigs, cactus mash, battery alkaline and formalin. Needless to say, these brews can have lethal health effects, including permanent blindness, mental illness and even death.

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www.CostaLandSales.com

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Hilton Family of Hotels
New online features make booking easier for all Hilton Family brands.
www.hiltonfamily.com

Vacations To Go
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www.swaintours.com

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www.squaremouth.com

Airfare and Hotel Bargains at SideStep
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Fig. 5: Lonely Planet

MagicalKenya.com - The official Kenya destination website - Mozilla Firefox

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MagicalKenya.com The official Kenya destination website



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Featured Destination

OWEN & MZEE - A TRUE STORY OF A REMARKABLE FRIENDSHIP Kenya's very own Owen and Mzee, the tortoise who adopted an abandoned hippo calf, have become known around the globe. Their unique freindship is now a best-selling children's book. They are also subjects of a new documentary and may possibly be the inspiration for a Hollywood movie.
[Feature Archive >>](#)

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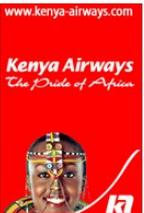
Recent News

KAKAPEL ROCK ART SITE OPENS TO PUBLIC Ancient rock paintings became available to visitors for the first time when Kakapel National Monument opened to the public January 30 in a colourful ceremony. The site, which was gazetted as a national monument in 2005, is expected to draw tourism revenues to the Kakapel community and Western Kenya...
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MOMBASA	 35°C 95°F	 36°C 96.8°F





MagicalKenya.com - the official destination website of Kenya Tourist Board

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Fig. 6: Magical Kenya

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Kenya



BACKGROUND

Kenya is an alluring country that contains an essence of ever-changing African whilst still being truly unique. Its know for its great plains teeming with exotic wildlife and memorable scenes of flamingos basking in the soda lakes of the **Rift Valley**, or wildebeest migrations in the Masai Mara, that have been immortalised in films such as **Out of Africa**.

For sea lovers, **Nombasa** and **Nalindi** offer great opportunities for scuba diving and snorkelling, and the Arabic influenced island of **Lamu** is a must for beach bums. For the intrepid traveller then there are plenty of opportunities for adventure such as climbing **Mount Kenya** or maybe a camel trek in the north.

There is a rich tapestry of tribes in Kenya, such as the **Kikuyu**, **Samburu**, **Swahili** and **Turkana** and historic influences from settlers and colonialists. The Europeans have had the most chequered history with Kenya, from the scandals of the **Happy Valley** to the Kikuyu led **Mau Mau uprising** that led to independence in 1963. Now, tourism is once again thriving in Kenya.

[Read the full story - background and travel essentials](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



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Our journey path, maps and on the road adventures >>>>



Where to Stay

Places where the Pilot crew rested their weary heads >>>>



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Summary of Kenya's **Best Beaches** for sunbathing and snorkelling



Festivals

Summary of Kenya's **best festivals**, from carnivals to motor cars



TV Shows

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Kenya's white goats: the tribe of **Samburu** people

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The most spectacular nature show on earth: Wildebeests and wildstuf at the **Masai Mara**



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Beads, wraps and sculptures shopping in Kenya's **crafts markets**



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Deep fry delight: **speciality foods** of Kenya



Travel Writers

Doubtful Dhow by **Adrienne Yerman**

The serene picturesque ideals of travelling by traditional boat turn into a nightmarish and stormy journey to hell and back on a dhow boat.

The Road Less Traveled by **Gina Picard**

The fear of being an outsider, and a touching human encounter on a dusty Kenyan road

Guide compiled by Electra Gilles

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Fig. 7: Pilot Destination Guide

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Kenya

Lying on the equator, with the glaciated peaks of Mount Kenya – second highest mountain in Africa – rising from a natural environment of exceptional beauty, Kenya is a hugely rewarding place to travel. The country's dramatically diverse geography has resulted in a great range of natural habitats, while its history of migration and conquest has brought about a complex social panorama. But if the world-famous national parks, colourful ethnic mix and superb beaches lend an exotic image, the glossy hype of the tourism industry ignores Kenya's post-colonial poverty and deep political tensions.

In any case, treating Kenya as a succession of tourist sights isn't the most stimulating way of experiencing the country. Travelling independently, or at least with eyes open (something this guide is designed to facilitate), you can enter the very different world inhabited by most Kenyans: a ceaselessly active landscape of farm and field, of streams and bush paths, of wooden and corrugated-iron shacks, tea shops and lodging houses, of crammed buses and pick-up vans, of overloaded bicycles, and of streets wandered by goats, chickens and toddlers. Off the more heavily trodden tourist routes, you'll find a rewarding degree of warmth, openness and curiosity in Kenya's towns and villages. And out in the wilds, there is an abundance of superb scenery – vistas of rolling savannah dotted with **Maasai** and their herds, high **Kikuyu** moorlands, dense **forests** bursting with bird song and insect noise, and stony, shimmering **desert** – all of which comes crisply into focus when experienced in the context of an economically beleaguered African nation four decades after Independence.

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Fig. 8: Rough Guides

Tim's and Lara Beth's Kenya Page - Mozilla Firefox

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TIM'S AND LARA BETH'S KENYA



Introduction

The Kenya Forum Message Board
(Permanently offline)

Guestbook

Site map



No current poll

Previous Poll Results

Question: "What is your relationship with Kenya?"

Of our visitors who responded, 52% lived in Kenya at some time, 29% learned about it in school and 16% visited on business or were citizens.

March 13, 2004

- The [anthem page](#) has been updated with a picture of President Mwai Kibaki (after receiving many emails about it).
- We may start selling some carvings, baskets, and other miscellaneous Kenyan stuff that my family brought back over the years. If we do this, we will set up a page with pictures and descriptions.
- The [Kenya quizzes](#) are still some of the most popular pages on the site.

Future of the site

This site was one of the first Kenya sites on the web. As far as we know, only [RC Bowen's page](#) was up before ours, although a couple of others came online around the same time as ours. We built the majority of this site in 1996 and 1997, when we had much more time than we have now.

We get a lot of email about Kenya and about linking to this site. We try to respond to as many as possible, but simply don't have time any more to do so. Also, we get a lot of questions about where to stay in Kenya, what it is like there, whether it is safe, etc. We haven't been to Kenya since 1989 and don't feel like we can honestly answer these questions anymore. We keep in touch with people there, but are no longer qualified to give advice or recommendations.

Due to lack of time, there will probably be no more updates nor will we be responding to email (unless it's from a friend who found us through the site or it's just so interesting that we can't help but respond). What is here will remain here and occasional updates may occur (but no promises). There are a lot of great Kenya sites now that can provide current information or answer questions. Thanks for all the emails supporting the site and we are glad that so many people have enjoyed it.

Tim and Lara Beth

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Last updated: March 13, 2004



Kenya

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Fig. 9: Tim's and Lara Beth's Kenya



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Kenya Travel Guide

Kenya is the 'Land of the Lion King' and sits at the centre of the African safari experience, with an outstanding variety of wild animals and Big Five opportunities. Although safaris are its greatest attraction, it is a country of great diversity with much more to offer than splendid wildlife. Essentially it is a place for outdoor living - the coast offers beaches and water-based activities, the mountains present a challenge to hikers and climbers, and the rolling savannahs are a game-viewers paradise.



Sunset over the plains © Kenya Tourist Office

The country sits astride the equator and offers fabulous scenery and a variety of tribal cultures. From its central location, the sacred peaks of Mt Kenya reign over a landscape primarily covered by grasslands and thorn trees, much of it enclosed within its many parks and reserves. To the west the spectacular Great Rift Valley is sprinkled with lakes teeming with a variety of birdlife, whose shores and surrounds are traversed by agricultural farmlands. To the east lies the promise of an idyllic beach holiday with the requisite white palm-fringed beaches and pristine coral reefs. Inhabiting the highlands and Rift Valley are two of the most well known of the numerous tribal cultures, the Kikuyu farmers and the tall, red-clad Masai cattle herders. The coast is home to ancient Swahili civilisations and old port towns that are rich in a history of exotic spice trading and fighting.

Kenya has a sophisticated tourism infrastructure, with two major cities controlling the majority of the tourism trade. Nairobi, the capital, is the safari and hiking hub, situated in the cool Central Highlands, while on the east coast the hot and humid trading port of Mombasa functions as the gateway to the resorts and pristine beaches of the area. Sadly the heavy influence of tourism has meant excessive prices for safaris, souvenirs and most activities of interest to foreigners, as well as the constant hassle by touts, guides and sellers to part with as much money as they can dupe the guilty traveller into spending.

Despite this, the people are friendly and visitors can choose to do as little or as much as they like, and the combination of wildlife, together with its beaches and mountains, make Kenya a fantastic holiday destination.

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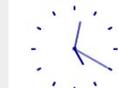
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Fig. 10: Word Travels

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Kenya [edit this]

Kenya has something for any traveller. There are many different landscapes and cultures, all quite different and beautiful. There is the desert of the north, and The Rift Valley where evidence of protohumans was first found. There are many brilliant Lakes, including Lake Victoria in western Kenya, Lake Naivasha and many more. Kenya has the second highest peak in Africa, the great Mt. Kenya. It has twenty National Parks and Reserves packed full of the exclusive "Big Five" (Elephant, Leopard, Lion, Cape Buffalo, and Rhinoceros).

Of course, there is also The Coast, very picturesque, with white sands, emerald water, and the Swahili culture, a unique mix of Arabic and Bantu influences. Compound the incredible scenery and limitless travel options with friendly and welcoming people, and visiting Kenya becomes a great vacation. While in coast visit the garden of eden :maweni beach cottages in tiwi. Lovely natural land scapes with self catering cottages. Fresh sea food to your doorstep every morning by the local fishermen.

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The northwestern region of this country, the Turkana District, is a vast, desolate, hot, and landscape where goatherders and bandits coexist. Lodwar, comparable to the "Dodge City" of the early American West, has the basic necessities of life, including Internet kiosks and semi-reliable electricity. Lokichoggio, the outpost in the northeasternmost sector of this country, is home to UN refugee camps with 30,000+ people. Roads are extremely rough, the terrain unforgiving, and people always inquisitive about what brings you to their country.

The best places to start your travels in Kenya are probably Nairobi N.P, the capital and South of Mombasa the second largest city, located on the coast. Both are served by international flights and have a very good tourist infrastructure.

Maasai Mara National Game Reserve is connected with Serengeti N.P. in Tanzania. The park is very accomodating to tourists, and offers many opportunities to see true African wildlife. The Maasai Mara Sopa Lodge is a true romantic complex overlooking the savannah and offering world class accomodations for the weary traveler.

Top Destinations in Kenya

Nairobi	Nyeri	Kisumu
Mombasa	Mount Kenya N.P.	Malindi
Lamu	Naivasha	The Rift Valley
Nakuru	Lake Naivasha	Masai Mara N.R.

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An Awesome Sunset
 location: Maasai Mara
 submitted by PassionForLife25
 Sunsets in themselves are awesome, but when you are watching one of the most spectacular in your life & then a herd of elephants strolls by... WOW!!!

Live Diary Page
 reporter: libabit
 location: Kumale
The big extortion
 After 5 hours of a ride, on a road with more holes than tar, we arrived in Kumale, the capital of the province. On the way we passed many picturesque clay villages. The houses of each family are in a circle with a court in the middle. Just to see these villages was worth suffering all those holes in the road. The type of people around me is starting to change slowly. Already on the ferry many people were looking more arabic than black. People that are tall and thin wearing long dresses an... more...

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Footprint
 location: Kenya
 submitted by girl_woodly
 The following morning, our driver meets us at the gates to the camp to take us back to our hotel. We have slept in tents with wooden banks, and are groggy as we climb into the jeep. As we set off, Nuala asks if the staff accommodation was OK. He smiles and points to the grass, saying that he slept there, as the camp was overbooked. He assures us that he doesn't mind, because next time his daughter loses her pen, he can tell her that he slept on the floor to get that pen for her, so she should've taken more care, and he laughs. He tells us that the only time he is concerned about his sleeping arrangements is when he takes tourists on week-long safaris, and he can end up sleeping in the car... more...



Footprint

On Simba's Trail...
 location: Kenya
 submitted by girl_woodly
 The following morning, our driver meets us at the gates to the camp to take us back to our hotel. We have slept in tents with wooden banks, and are groggy as we climb into the jeep. As we set off, Nuala asks if the staff accommodation was OK. He smiles and points to the grass, saying that he slept there, as the camp was overbooked. He assures us that he doesn't mind, because next time his daughter loses her pen, he can tell her that he slept on the floor to get that pen for her, so she should've taken more care, and he laughs. He tells us that the only time he is concerned about his sleeping arrangements is when he takes tourists on week-long safaris, and he can end up sleeping in the car... more...



Flamingoes, Lake Nakuru National Park
 location: Kenya
 submitted by chrismullane
 Just a few of the several million flamingoes that flock to Lake Nakuru each year. The sound of all those birds was deafening, not to mention the aroma - which was far from pleasant. However the sight of all that pink far out weighed the noise and the smell.

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Kenya
 Officially the Republic of Kenya, Swahili Jamhuri ya Kenya, Kenya is an African country along the Indian Ocean, covering an area of 224,961 square miles (582,646 square km). The capital is Nairobi.

Situated astride the equator on the East African coast, Kenya is bounded by Ethiopia and The Sudan on the north, by Somalia and the Indian Ocean on the east, by Tanzania on the south, and by Uganda on the west. The population in 1990 was estimated to be 24,872,000.

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 - Rift Valley (2)
 - Mombasa (9)
 - Western Kenya

Member Recommended
Restaurant: The Tamarind
 location: Mombasa
 submitted by Lucy
 Never has seafood tasted so good, and no, it wasn't just because someone else was paying. The Tamarind in Mombasa has a lot to live up to - it's cited in every Kenya guide book known to man as the finest seafood restaurant in Kenya. My expectations were huge but it didn't disappoint. Start wi... more...



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Member Recommended
 Location: Mombasa Highway
 location: Mombasa Highway
 submitted by Lucy
 It would not be a good idea to travel from Mombasa to Malindi if you needed the toilet. It also wasn't a good idea to travel the road while drinking a beer (I wasn't driving). I ended up with wet shorts - from the beer, that is, not the need to go to the toilet! Let me explain: this road is the... more...

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Fig. 12: Worldsurface

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KENYA TRAVEL GUIDE - OVERVIEW

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Excavations in Kenya suggest that the region is the cradle of humanity, the home some 3.25 million years ago of *Homo habilis*, from whom *Homo sapiens* descended. What is certain is that, in more recent times, Kenya was the setting place of a huge number of tribes from all over Africa, with a long history of migration, settlement and conflict. During the following centuries, the region became prosperous on the profits of trade, and also as an entrepôt for commerce from the Indian Ocean.

Today, Kenya, regarded by many as the 'jewel of East Africa', has some of the continent's finest beaches, most magnificent wildlife and scenery and an incredibly sophisticated tourism infrastructure. It is a startlingly beautiful land, from the coral reefs and white sand beaches of the coast to the summit of Mount Kenya, crowned with clouds and bejewelled by strange giant alpine plants. Above all, Kenya is a place for safaris. Between these two extremes is the rolling savannah that is home to game parks such as Amboseli, the Masai Mara, Samburu and Tsavo, the lush, agricultural highlands with their sleek green coat of coffee and tea plantations; and the most spectacular stretch of the Great Rift Valley, the giant scar across the face of Africa.

One-tenth of all land in Kenya is designated as national parks and reserves. Over 50 parks and reserves cover all habitats from desert to mountain forest, and there are even six marine parks in the Indian Ocean.

Kenya also has a fascinatingly diverse population with around 40 different tribes, all with their own (often related) languages and cultures. The major tribes include the Kikuyu from the central highlands, the Luo in the northwest, and the Luo around Lake Victoria. Of them all, however, the most famous are the tall, proud, beautiful red-cled Masai, who still lead a traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle of cattle-herding along the southern border.

Kenya does have to downside as a tourist destination. Rampant corruption means that many of the roads are in poor condition and driving can be a chore. Urban crime is high and continuing inter-tribal skirmishes and banditry are a threat in some areas of the North. More prosaically, the tourist trade has taught people there to think of foreigners as open wallets. Prices for everything from park fees to hotel rooms are set way above the local level. There is enormous pressure to buy anything and everything, often at ridiculously inflated prices, and even taking a photograph in the local market is likely to incur a cost. But despite this, the people are friendly, and the tourist trade is supremely well organised and professional. For those in search of a little adventure, this can be an ideal holiday destination.

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Appendix II: Screenshots Group II

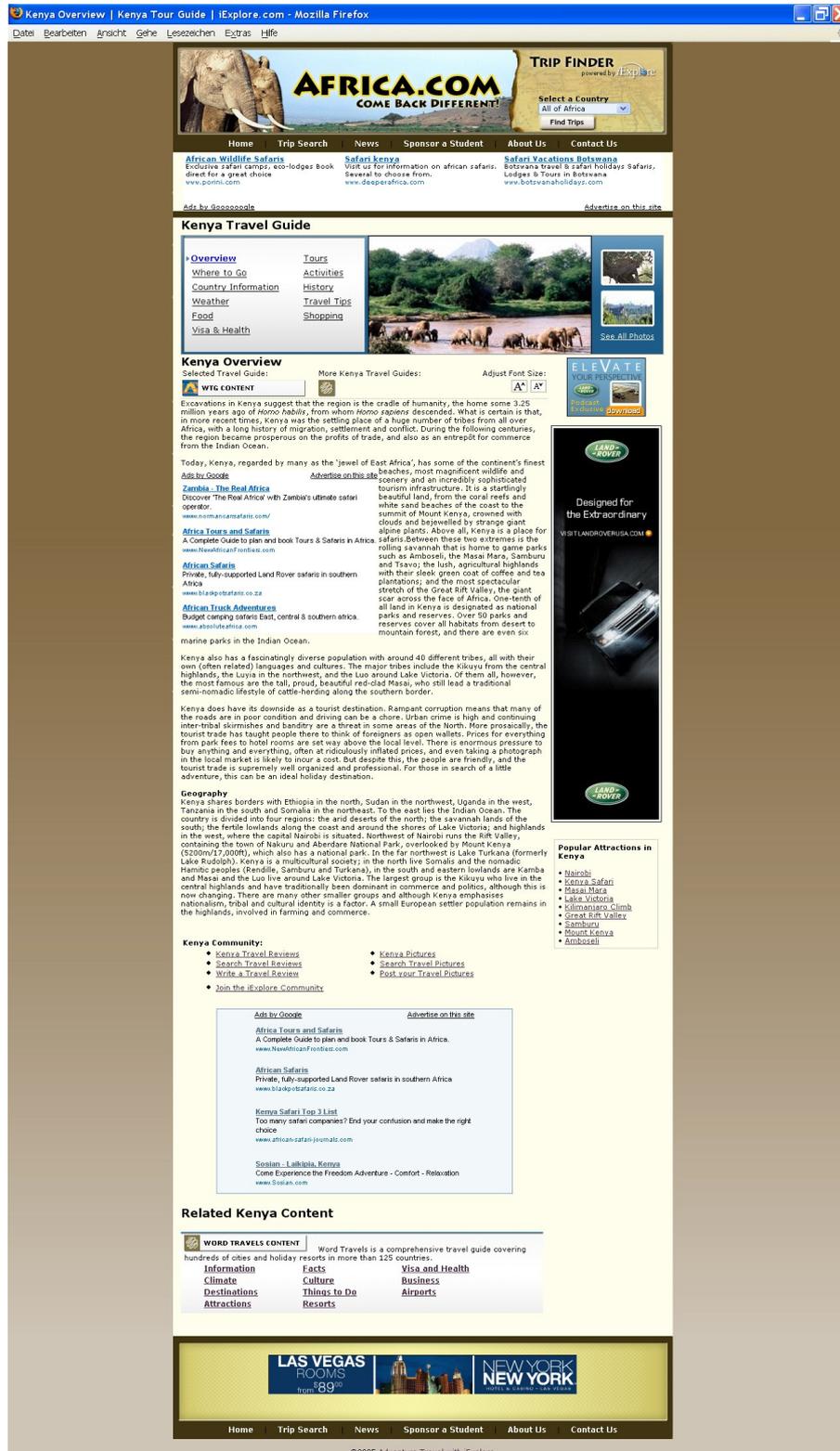


Fig. 1: Africa.com

Kenya Travel Basics Resource Guide - Mozilla Firefox

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AfricaPoint Kenya Travel Basics Information

Kenya Travel information with topics on health, visas, the people, communication among others. We also book Kenya Safaris, Kenya Hotels and Kenya Car Rentals on this website. Contact us today for a discount quote.

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Kenya Travel Information:

The popular image of safari, especially in the west, is inseparable from Kenya. Earlier in the last century, gifted writers such as Ernest Hemingway and Karen Blixen brought to life the wild images and uplifting experiences that constitute a Kenyan safari. It is at this time that leading celebrities of the day such as Teddy Roosevelt and Prince Edward traveled to the safari, and in the safari gained a certain nobility appeal. The famous west because it was expected of them. And those on the safari because the safari was part of the certification they needed on the way up. If you want to take a peek into the mood and character of the savanna at that time, read Hemingway's intriguing short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber".

The landscape telegraphs tells on the magnificent rift valley, the central highlands, the savannah grasslands, snow capped Mount Kenya and the dramatic mountains of the north. This is perhaps why the experts advise all those faithful lovers of wildlife and culture that at least once in their lifetime they must partake of a Kenyan safari.

Below is some basic info concerning Kenya -

Health

Visitors over 1 year of age entering Kenya from yellow fever infected areas require yellow fever international certificate of vaccination. Exceptions are made for visitors arriving from non-endemic areas such as Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Cholera is a health risk in the country and precautions are essential. Malaria is a serious risk in most of the country. The risk level is however lower in the highlands above 2000m, of the Central, Rift Valley, Eastern and Western Provinces. Visitors are strongly advised to take anti-malaria medication commencing two weeks before travel.

It is recommended, especially for longer staying visitors, to take vaccinations against hepatitis A, pain and typhoid. HIV/AIDS is prevalent in the country and prudent measures are called for. Some fresh water lakes and rivers carry the risk of schistosoma and you are advised to swim or paddle in such areas. There are good hospitals in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Clinics can be found in all the major towns.

Visas

Passports valid for 6 months from date of entry are required of all visitors. All visitors require a visa except for citizens of some commonwealth countries. There are also exceptions with varying conditions for citizens of Ethiopia, Turkey, Malaysia, and Uruguay and a few other countries. Airport visas are available although this may result in delays upon arrival. It is advisable to obtain visas in advance from Foreign Embassies and High Commissions as some embassies may require it before allowing you to depart. Visa requirements vary from time to time and you are advised to check on prevailing status well ahead of travel.

People & Culture

Kenya is made up of more than 70 or so tribal groups. There are also small but influential minorities of Arab, Indian and European origin. More than 90% of the African population falls within the broad categories of Bantu and Nilotic speakers. The main Bantu speakers are Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, Mijikenda, Embu and Meru. Nilotic speakers are Masai, Samburu, Somali, Turkana, Luo and Kapsirio, at the coast, the intersection of Arabic, Persian and Bantu Africans has resulted in the Swahili people. The Swahili language is now widely spoken in Kenya and throughout Eastern and Central Africa. It is quite useful to have a working knowledge of Swahili if you intend to travel outside the main urban and tourist routes. English is widely understood in urban centres.

The de facto national dish is Nyama Choma, barbecued goat meat. But the guy in the street survives on that starchy flour called ugali, prepared using maize and accompanied with some greens. At the coast however the traditional food of the Swahili is a good experience. This is usually based on seafood and rice dishes. Beer lovers will have a good time in Kenya. There are several international standard lagers produced locally. The most popular is named after its elephant, the Tusker. While on safari, remember to celebrate the African elephant by taking a little Tusker.

In the last few years there has been some kind of revival in local music. The revival is led by younger urban artists who sing in Swahili and Sheng, a kind of Creole mix of Swahili and English. The music is a local blend of hip-hop and rap.

Communications

Telephone, fax, telegram, post and internet services are available in urban centres and locations popular with tourists. International direct dialing to many countries is available in most urban centres. In rural areas international calling is through the operator. The country code for Kenya is 254.

Mobile phones are based on GSM 900 network. Coverage extends to the principal urban centres, major highways and parts of popular game reserves such as the Maasai Mara. You are however advised to check beforehand whether your GSM phone is usable if you are traveling outside the main urban centre. If you own a GSM phone that will allow you to make international calls to any country. Currently the country is served by two mobile operators: Safaricom (www.safaricom.co.ke) and Sotcom (www.safcom.co.ke). There are internet cafes in urban centres and hotels around the country.

Accommodation

You will find good quality accommodation within the main routes popular with tourists and business travelers. This includes Nairobi, Mombasa, Lamu, Malindi, Lake Naivasha, Kisumu and the popular game reserves and national parks such as Maasai Mara, Amboseli, Lake Nakuru, Tsavo, Aberdare, Serengeti and the Mount Kenya area. In the parks, accommodation varies from 1-2 star lodges and tented camps at the upper end, to basic camps at the lower end. Outside the main urban centres and tourist routes, it is difficult to get rated accommodation. [Safari and Travel Blogs](#) provides a monthly page to view info and book accommodation for your stay in Kenya.

Money

The local currency is the Kenya Shilling (KSh). There are no restrictions on the import and export of local or foreign currency. But for amounts exceeding US dollars 5,000 or equivalent you will need to declare the source and purpose of the funds. Major currencies such as the dollar and now the Euro and traveller cheques can be converted at major hotels, banks and foreign bureaus in the main towns and tourist areas. You will get best exchange rates for cash or traveller cheques if you are dealing in US dollars or Pound Sterling. For this your best deal will be at foreign bureaus. Avoid changing money in the street however favourable the exchange rate may appear.

Visa and Mastercard have wide acceptance. But American Express, Diners and other cards have more limited acceptance. Your visa card can access your bank or credit card account through any Standard Chartered Bank dispenser, 24 hours a day.

Climate

Kenya has such diverse geography that, temperatures, rainfall and humidity vary widely. The country can be divided into four main regions: the east coast, the savanna lands in the south, the central highlands and the highlands along the coast and the Lake Victoria region. The coastal areas are hot and humid though tempered by some much welcome sea breezes. Average temperatures vary little year round and range from 22°C minimum to 30°C maximum.

The central highlands and rift valley enjoy a pleasant temperate climate. Average temperatures vary from a minimum of 10°C to a maximum of 20°C to 22°C. The Lake Victoria lowlands are hot and dry and temperatures can reach 34°C. Rainfall is also heavy. The west and north experiences the most extreme variations in temperatures. This ranges from a maximum of 40°C in the day to 20°C at night. There are two rainy seasons: March to May (long rains) and October to December (short rains).

International Travel

Kenya is a regional travel hub and has connections by a large number of airlines from all over the world particularly those from Europe, Asia and other parts of Africa. The country has three international airports at Nairobi, Mombasa and Eldoret. The national airline is Kenya Airways, a major player in African air travel. British Airways and Kenya Airways fly to Nairobi direct from London, a few European airlines also have direct flights from their hubs in Europe. Gulf Air and Emirates fly to Nairobi using mid eastern connections.

In addition to flying, you can travel by bus between Kenya and Tanzania. The main connections are from Nairobi and Mombasa to Dar es Salaam and from Nairobi to Mombasa and Kisumu. Occasional ferries leave Mombasa for Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. Visas can be received from Kenya by air, rail and bus. There is a border crossing at Moyale on the Kenya-Ethiopia border and which is mainly used by trucks. Overland travel to Sudan and Somalia is exceedingly difficult at present.

Local Travel

There are scheduled flights to a number of local destinations from Nairobi to Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu, Malindi, Lamu, Lake Nakuru and the national parks and game reserves of Maasai Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo. See our web page for info and booking of [Local Travel in Kenya](#). You can also travel to a few urban centers in the country by train though this has not been viable in recent years. Regular bus service links the main urban centres.

Around urban areas and shorter links between towns, the popular way to get around is by means of matatu (shared taxi). Matatu cars are readily available from Mombasa, Kisumu and Nairobi. Review our [matatu cars in Kenya](#) web page and do your booking here. Remember that drivers in the left. Generally, between urban centers the road links are good. The quality deteriorates when you get off the main routes and into more remote locations.

Travel Insurance

Health and the usual travel insurance are recommended. Ensure your travel insurance includes emergency evacuation.

What to Wear

Light clothing is generally recommended in Kenya. The highlands are however temperate and you need a sweater and jacket year round. This is necessary for the evenings and early mornings. If you plan to climb Mount Kenya be ready with special clothing not only for the climb but to protect yourself from sub zero temperatures.

On safari, bright coloured clothing may get you in trouble with the wild animals. Colors of the earth are generally favoured, thus brown, beige and khaki clothing. Short sleeve shirts, shorts and trousers for men are sufficient. For ladies, short sleeve blouses and skirts are ideal in the national parks and tourist places. This is except in the predominantly Muslim coastal areas, where more conservative dressing is called for. But even at the coast, swimwear is perfectly acceptable at beaches and hotel premises.

It is advisable to travel light and some safari and air charterers have a baggage limit of 10-15 kilograms. To read more info related to Kenya travel click on the links below:-

- Kenya Safaris Overview
- Kenya Destination Facts
- Kenya Travel Guides
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Fig. 2: Africa Point



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Fig. 3: Go 2 Africa

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Kenya

Destination Kenya, this page is about many aspects of Kenya. Here you will find comprehensive information about Kenya in its diversity: geography, economy, science, people, culture, environment, government and history. You will have access to newspapers from Kenya and you will find extensive travel and tourism information for Kenya.

Official Sites :: Maps :: News :: Culture :: Business :: Country Guides :: Education :: History :: Nature :: Search :: Sports :: Additional Links

Kenya



Flag of Kenya

Background:
Revered president and liberation struggle icon Jomo KENYATTA led Kenya from independence until his death in 1978, when 2nd President Daniel Toroitich arap MOI took power in a constitutional succession. The country was a de facto one-party state from 1969 until 1992 when the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) made itself the sole legal party in Kenya. MOI acceded to internal and external pressure for political liberalization in late 1991. The ethnically fractured opposition failed to dislodge KANU from power in elections in 1992 and 1997, which were marred by violence and fraud, but are viewed as having generally reflected the will of the Kenyan people. President MOI stepped down in December of 2002 following fair and peaceful elections. Mwai KIBAKI, running as the candidate of the multiethnic, united opposition group, the National Rainbow Coalition, defeated KANU candidate Uhuru KENYATTA and assumed the presidency following a campaign centered on an anticorruption platform. (Source: CIA - The World Factbook)

border countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda
related countries: United Kingdom

Country Profile



Official Name:
Republic of Kenya
conventional short form: Kenya
former: British East Africa.

ISO Country Code: **ke**
Actual Time: Fri-May-19 16:20
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Capital City: **Nairobi** (pop. 2.1 million)

Other Cities:
Mombasa (665 000), Kisumu (504 000), Nakuru (1.2 million).

Government:
Type: Republic.
Independence: 12 December 1963 (from UK).

Geography:
Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Somalia and Tanzania.
Area: 582 646 sq. km. (225 000 sq mi.)
Terrain: From a low coastal plain on the Indian Ocean in a series of mountain ridges and plateaus which stand above 3 000 meters (9 000 ft.) in the center of the country. The Rift Valley bisects the country above Nairobi, opening up to a broad arid plain in the north. Mountain plains cover the south before descending to the shores of Lake Victoria in the west.
Highest elevation: Mount Kenya (Kininyaga, 5199 m)

Climate: Varies from the tropical south, west, and central regions to arid and semi-arid in the north and the northeast.

People:
Nationality: Kenyan(s).
Population: 31.5 million.
Ethnic groups: African--Kikuyu 21%, Luhya 14%, Luo 13%, Kalenjin 11%, Kamba 11%, Kisi 6%, Meru 5%, Non-African--Asian, European, Arab 1%.
Religions: Protestant 40%, Roman Catholic 30%, Muslim 20%, indigenous beliefs 10%.
Languages: English, Swahili, more than 40 local ethnic languages.
Literacy (in English): 59%.

Natural resources: Wildlife, land.

Agriculture Products: Tea, coffee, sugarcane, horticultural products.

Industries: Small-scale consumer goods (plastic, furniture, batteries, textiles, soap, cigarettes, flour), agricultural products processing, oil refining, cement, tourism.

Exports partners: Uganda 12.7%, UK 12.5%, USA 9.4%, Netherlands 6.5%, Pakistan 5%, Egypt 4.6%, Tanzania 4.3% (2003)

Note: External links will open in a new browser window.

Official Sites of Kenya

Kenya Government
Government of Republic of Kenya.

State House
President Mwai Kibaki's office.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kenya

Kenya Mission to the United Nations
Embassy of the Republic of Kenya
Kenyan Embassy Web Site, Washington D.C.

Kenya Government Index
Addresses of institutions of the Kenyan Government.

Statistics
Central Bureau of Statistics

Weather
Kenya Meteorological Department

Map
Map of Kenya
Political map of Kenya.
Google Earth Kenya
Zoomable satellite view of Kenya.
Map of Africa
Political map of Africa.

Fig. 6: One World - Nations Online

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Kenya

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Introduction

Kenya lies astride the equator on the eastern coast of Africa. Kenya is bordered in the north by Sudan and Ethiopia, in the east by Somalia, on the southeast by the Indian Ocean, on the southwest by Tanzania and to the west by Lake Victoria and Uganda.

Kenya is notable for its' geographical variety. The low-lying, fertile coastal region, fringed with coral reefs and islands, is back by a gradually rising coastal plain, a dry region covered with savanna and thornbush.

At an altitude of about 1,524 m and 300 miles inland, the plain gives way in the southwest to a high plateau, rising in parts to 3,049 m, in which about 85% of the population and the majority of economic enterprise are concentrated. The northern section of Kenya, forming three-fifths of the whole territory, is arid and of semidesert character, as is the bulk of the southeastern quarter. In the high plateau area, known as the Kenya Highlands, lie Mt. Kenya (5,200 m), Mt Elgon (4,322m) and the Aberdare Ranger (rising to over 3,963 m). The plateau is bisected from north to south by the Rift Valley, part of the great geological fracture that can be traced from Syria through the Red Sea and East Africa to Mozambique. In the north of Kenya, the valley is broad and shallow, embracing Lake Turkana (160 miles long), while further south it narrows and deepens and is walled by escarpments 610 to 930 mtr high. West of the Rift Valley, the plateau descends to the plains that border Lake Victoria. The principal rivers are the Tana and the Athi, flowing southeast to the Indian Ocean, the Ewaso Ngiro flowing northeast to the swamps of the Lorian Plain, and the Nzoia, Yala and Gori, which drain eastward into Lake Victoria. Low plains rise to central highlands, divided by the Great African Rift Valley.

- Country Info
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- VISITOR INFORMATION
- REGIONS AND TOWNS
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- MUSIC

The Africa Guide's recommended book
The Rough Guide to Kenya May 2002 edition ([amazon.com](#)) - USA ([amazon.co.uk](#)) - UK by Richard Trillo

This is pretty much everything a guide book should be; plenty of detail on the mainstream stuff (where to stay and eat in Nairobi, how to organise a safari in the Maasai Mara), but plenty also on the areas off the beaten track. Best of all, the book is unfailingly relevant, avoiding the usual pages of filler on the blindingly obvious. The wealth of background information and the dry, witty style are welcome bonuses. The best recommendation I can give this book is that it quite simply made our holiday much more enjoyable than it would have been (*a reader*)

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Fig. 7: The Africa Guide

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September 17-19th 2004 - Mombasa Triathlon

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Featured Articles:

Bird Watching on Manda and Lamu Islands

Growing up in Kenya, I had heard of the ancient Arab-African culture of the Lamu archipelago. In October 2000, I had my first chance to experience this amazing hidden tourist destination on Kenya's north coast. [More...](#)

A Volunteer's Night Out in Kisumu

Kisumu is probably not the place where people would think to go in Kenya for an evening out. Located on the shores of Lake Victoria, Kisumu is a sleepy little town with sidewalks that tend to roll up after 8 PM. [But More...](#)

Crater Lake Kenya's Best Kept Secret

Crater Lake is a secluded green soda lake at the bottom of an extinct volcano, tucked away in central Kenya. It is, in the authors opinion, the most beautiful natural phenomena in Kenya. [More...](#)

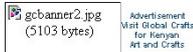
Lamu Archipelago, the Other Face of Kenya

In recent years the laid back travelers destinations around the world have fast become developed resorts. Lamu is the exception, the peace and tranquility, of a relaxing and largely undiscovered set of islands still draws both the backpackers and the exclusive holiday makers looking for the unusual. [More...](#)

Race to the North for the Annual Camel Derby: Results ([Book online for the 2002 Camel Race](#))

Kenya is known for its beautiful parks and ideal opportunities for big game viewing, diversity of scenery ranging from its golden beaches on the Indian Ocean, to its challenging mountain climbs [Mt. Kenya] and its arid northern desert regions, home of the nomadic tribes still unaffected by modern times. ([Book online for the 2002 Camel Race](#))

Kenya is known for its beautiful parks and ideal opportunities for big game viewing, diversity of scenery ranging from its golden beaches on the Indian Ocean, to its challenging mountain climbs [Mt. Kenya] and its arid northern desert regions, home of the nomadic tribes still unaffected by modern times. [More...](#)



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Resort
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Pinewood
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Resort

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Fig. 8: Tourism Kenya

Appendix III: Screenshots Group III



Fig. 1: Africanet



Fig. 2: Kenya Beach Travel



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Fig. 3: Kenya.com

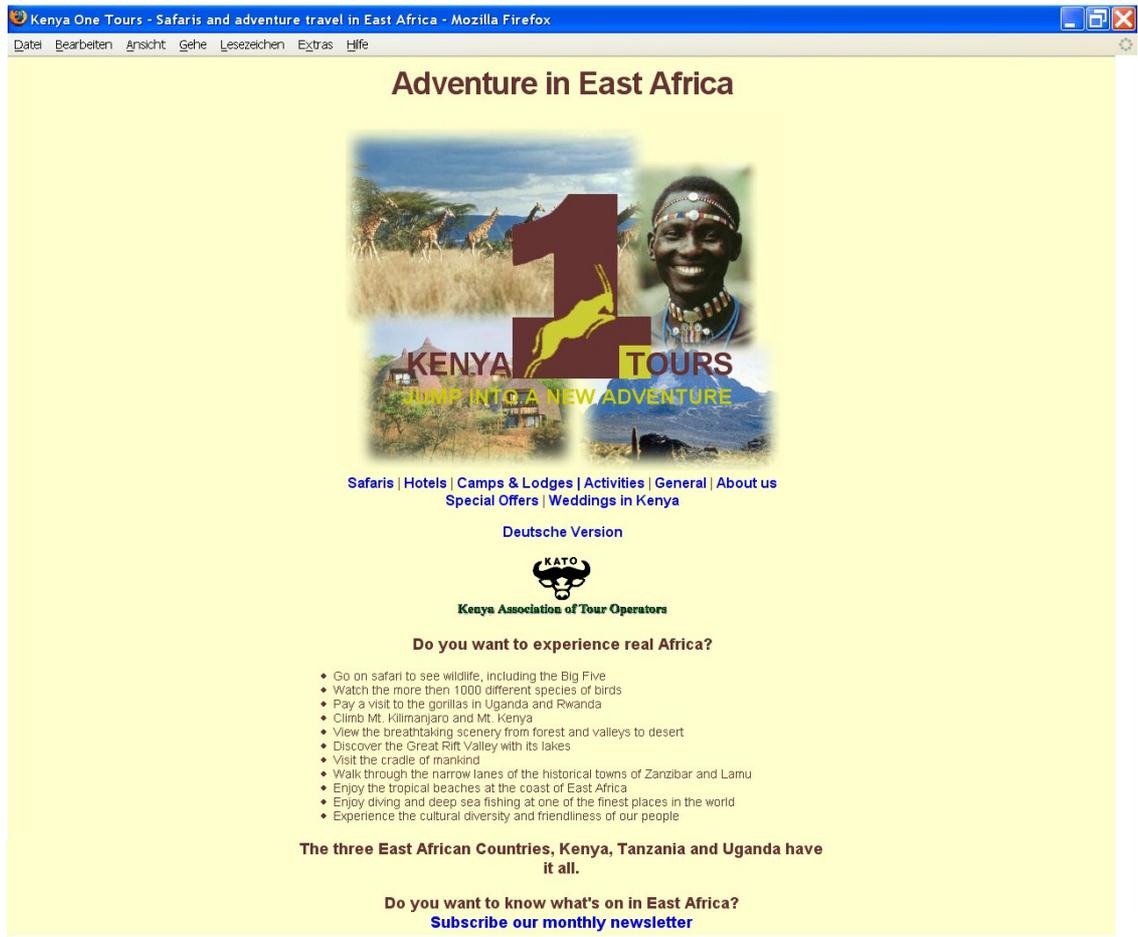


Fig. 4: Kenya1Tours

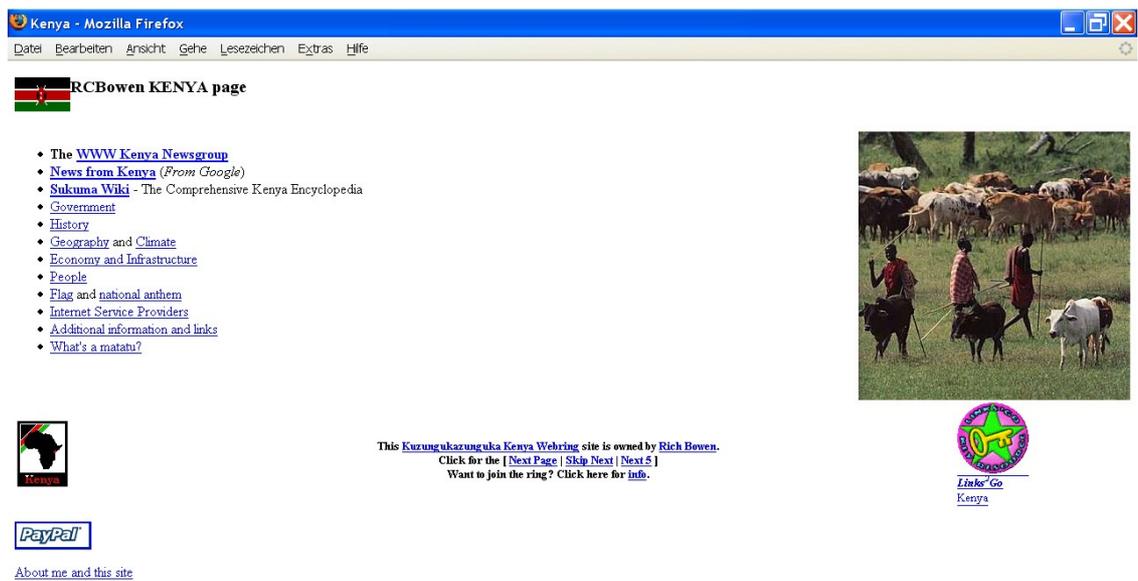


Fig. 5: RC Bowen Kenya Page



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12. Malindi
13. Lamu Island
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16. Lake Naivasha
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Fig. 6: Virtual Tourist



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Fig. 7: VisitKenya

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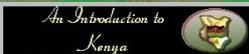
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Fig. 8: Visit-Kenya

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 - Foreign airlines
 - National airports
- By car
 - Car rental
 - Itinerary planning
- By train
 - Railway companies
- By sea

Accommodation

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