

# Tutorial

HOW ARE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS  
WITH THE CLIENTS CHANGING?

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## INTRODUCTION

The ground rules for marketing have changed and evolved with the emergence of the Internet and new communication technologies, and tourist habits have also changed. Currently, many companies have opted for social networks as channels for promotion; this is what is known as **social marketing**.

This tutorial contains a summary of the new channels available for promoting and marketing tourism products and services, the classification of these channels and a description of the channels that are the most effective for tourism businesses.

## 1. A typical tourist profile today

Tourist demand is subject to constant change. Therefore, a typical tourist profile now is very different from the profile a decade ago, and the profile in the future.

One of the most important characteristics of the tourists these days is the **influence that social networks have** on:

- Their access to and the level of information they receive about tourism destinations, products and services.
- Their purchasing choices.

According to the “Social Travel”<sup>1</sup> study, undertaken by “Territorio Creativo” and “NH Hoteles”, the most used source of information for social travellers are search engines. However, most tourists make their final choices thanks to the information on the social networks. The term “**social traveller or tourist 2.0**” defines this trend.

This tourist 2.0 does not only use the Internet and social networks to find information and plan their trip, but also to help him/her during their trip. The use of smartphones during the trip allows tourists to look for information in situ, make reservations, and buy tourism services and products – and they can also share their experiences on the web. For this reason, **tourists prefer to stay at establishments that provide technological services**: Wi-Fi connection, online management of reservations and payments, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Download the document: Social\_Traveler\_2013.pdf

## 2. What are Social Networks?

**Social networks are a social medium<sup>2</sup>. These satisfy the users' needs for communication, collaboration, multimedia and entertainment.**

A social network is a website that promotes virtual communities according to individual interests. Social networks bring together millions of users giving them the opportunity to exchange information, in a multitude of formats, with other network members.

Social Networks on the Internet have undoubtedly become a social phenomenon that revolutionizes the ways that humans communicate and interact. Their ease of use and popularity undoubtedly gives them the potential to strengthen a brand and develop a business.

Buyers of tourism products and services increasingly use social networks to inspire and plan their purchasing decisions.

## 3. How are Social Networks classified?

There are thousands of social networks so there is no specific way of classifying them. This also means that one network may belong to more than one type. To classify them, you can use the following criteria:

Criteria	Types	Description
<b>According to users' interests</b>	<b>Horizontal</b>	Open to participation from everyone who wants to be involved, meaning that they are not looking for a specific user-profile.
	<b>Vertical</b>	Aimed at a specific public, they are specialized and the members have common interests. These social networks can be professional, recreational or mixed, depending on their purpose.
<b>Varies according to</b>	<b>Human</b>	Promote the interaction between different users according to general interest and activities.

<sup>2</sup> "Websites, blogs, forums, online communities, social networks and sites where you can share images and videos that encourage users to interact, share and collaborate" Source: Google Inc.

<b>the type of interaction or relationship between the users</b>	<b>Social content</b>	The relationship between users originates through accessing a variety of published content.
<b>Varies according to geographical area</b>	<b>Sedentary</b>	Deal with contents non-related to the geographic location.
	<b>Nomad</b>	Incorporate a component of the geographic location.

Therefore, social networks can also be distributed according to the need that they satisfy. In the following table, you can see the most representative types of social media, with examples.

Group	Type	Description	Examples
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Blog</b>	<p>Online publication with periodic posts published and displayed in chronological order.</p> <p>In general, the readers can write their comments about each article and the author can answer them. This establishes a dialogue between the participants.</p> <p>The use and theme of each blog depends on the writer. The language and style used is thus different in each case.</p>	<a href="http://www.blogger.com">Blogger<sup>3</sup></a> <a href="http://www.livejournal.com">LiveJournal<sup>4</sup></a> <a href="http://wordpress.com">WordPress<sup>5</sup></a>

<sup>3</sup> [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

<sup>4</sup> [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)

<sup>5</sup> [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)

	<b>Forum</b>	An online communication platform, dealing with certain topics and allowing people to put out queries and state their opinions.	<a href="#">vBulletin<sup>6</sup></a> <a href="#">phpBB<sup>7</sup></a>
	<b>Micro-blogging</b>	Also known as nano-blogging, this is a web service where users can send and publish messages, usually in text format. These messages are brief (usually 140 characters, mostly about events that are happening at the time of communication.	<a href="#">Twitter<sup>8</sup></a> <a href="#">Tumblr<sup>9</sup></a>
	<b>Social networks</b>	Websites that promote virtual communities related to individual interests	<a href="#">Facebook<sup>10</sup></a> <a href="#">LinkedIn<sup>11</sup></a> <a href="#">Pinterest<sup>12</sup></a> <a href="#">Tuenti<sup>13</sup></a> <a href="#">MySpace<sup>14</sup></a> <a href="#">Netlog<sup>15</sup></a> <a href="#">Hi5<sup>16</sup></a> <a href="#">Google+<sup>17</sup></a>

<sup>6</sup> [www.vbulletin.com](http://www.vbulletin.com)

<sup>7</sup> [www.phpbb.com](http://www.phpbb.com)

<sup>8</sup> <https://twitter.com>

<sup>9</sup> [www.tumblr.com](http://www.tumblr.com)

<sup>10</sup> [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

<sup>11</sup> [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

<sup>12</sup> [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

<sup>13</sup> [www.tuenti.com](http://www.tuenti.com)

<sup>14</sup> <https://myspace.com>

<sup>15</sup> [www.netlog.com](http://www.netlog.com)

<sup>16</sup> [www.hi5.com](http://www.hi5.com)

<sup>17</sup> <https://plus.google.com>

	<b>Bundling systems</b>	Systems that provide access in real time, all in one place, to updates about news on social networks, blogs and microblogs, as well as any source of news in RSS and Atom formats.	<a href="#">FriendFeed</a> <sup>18</sup>
	<b>Events</b>	Online platforms that allow users to find out about events and activities that are happening every day in their chosen location.	<a href="#">Eventful</a> <sup>19</sup> <a href="#">Meetup.com</a> <sup>20</sup>
	<b>Location-based social networks</b>	These are based on the user's location.	<a href="#">Foursquare</a> <sup>21</sup>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Wiki</b>	Websites whose content can be edited by multiple users voluntarily via web browsers.	<a href="#">Wikipedia</a> <sup>22</sup>
	<b>Social bookmarks</b>	These provide a way to store, classify and share links on the Internet or an Intranet.  In such systems, users create a list of Internet resources they consider useful. These lists can either be public or have restricted access.	<a href="#">Stumpedia</a> <sup>23</sup> <a href="#">Diigo</a> <sup>24</sup> <a href="#">Digg</a> <sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> [www.friendfeed.com](http://www.friendfeed.com)<sup>19</sup> [www.eventful.com](http://www.eventful.com)<sup>20</sup> [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)<sup>21</sup> <https://foursquare.com><sup>22</sup> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)<sup>23</sup> [www.stumpedia.com](http://www.stumpedia.com)<sup>24</sup> [www.diigo.com](http://www.diigo.com)<sup>25</sup> [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com)



	<b>Opinion sites</b>	Websites where opinions can be shared about products and services	<a href="#">Yelp<sup>26</sup></a>
	<b>Social commerce sites</b>	Websites that use social interaction and user contributions to improve the online shopping experience.	<a href="#">iMythos<sup>27</sup></a>
<b>Multimedia</b>	<b>Photo sharing</b>	Platforms that host and share their users' images.	<a href="#">Pinterest<sup>28</sup></a> <a href="#">Instagram<sup>29</sup></a> <a href="#">Flickr<sup>30</sup></a> <a href="#">Zoomr<sup>31</sup></a> <a href="#">Photobucket<sup>32</sup></a> <a href="#">Picasa<sup>33</sup></a>
	<b>Video sharing</b>	Platforms that host videos that can be shared with other users	<a href="#">YouTube<sup>34</sup></a> <a href="#">Vimeo<sup>35</sup></a>
	<b>Art sharing</b>	Websites where artistic activities are shared.	<a href="#">deviantART<sup>36</sup></a>

<sup>26</sup> [www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com)

<sup>27</sup> <http://mythos360.com>

<sup>28</sup> [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

<sup>29</sup> [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)

<sup>30</sup> [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

<sup>31</sup> [www.zoomr.com](http://www.zoomr.com)

<sup>32</sup> [photobucket.com](http://photobucket.com)

<sup>33</sup> [www.picasa.google.com](http://www.picasa.google.com)

<sup>34</sup> [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

<sup>35</sup> <https://vimeo.com>

<sup>36</sup> [www.deviantart.com](http://www.deviantart.com)

Entertainment	<b>Live broadcasts</b>	Platforms with live broadcasts via web or mobile	<a href="#">Skype<sup>37</sup></a> <a href="#">Last.fm<sup>38</sup></a> <a href="#">SoundCloud<sup>39</sup></a>
	<b>Virtual worlds</b>	Interactive virtual communities are set in an artificial environment where users can interact with each other.	<a href="#">Second Life<sup>40</sup></a> <a href="#">The Sims Online<sup>41</sup></a>
	<b>Online games</b>	Digital games where an active network connection is required to play.	<a href="#">EverQuest<sup>42</sup></a> <a href="#">Angels online<sup>43</sup></a>
	<b>Shared games</b>	Also called "multiplayer games" - they allow real-time play, between two or more Internet users.	<a href="#">Miniclip<sup>44</sup></a>

<sup>37</sup> [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

<sup>38</sup> [www.last.fm](http://www.last.fm)

<sup>39</sup> [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com)

<sup>40</sup> [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com)

<sup>41</sup> [www.thesims.com](http://www.thesims.com)

<sup>42</sup> [www.everquest.com](http://www.everquest.com)

<sup>43</sup> [www.ao.igg.com](http://www.ao.igg.com)

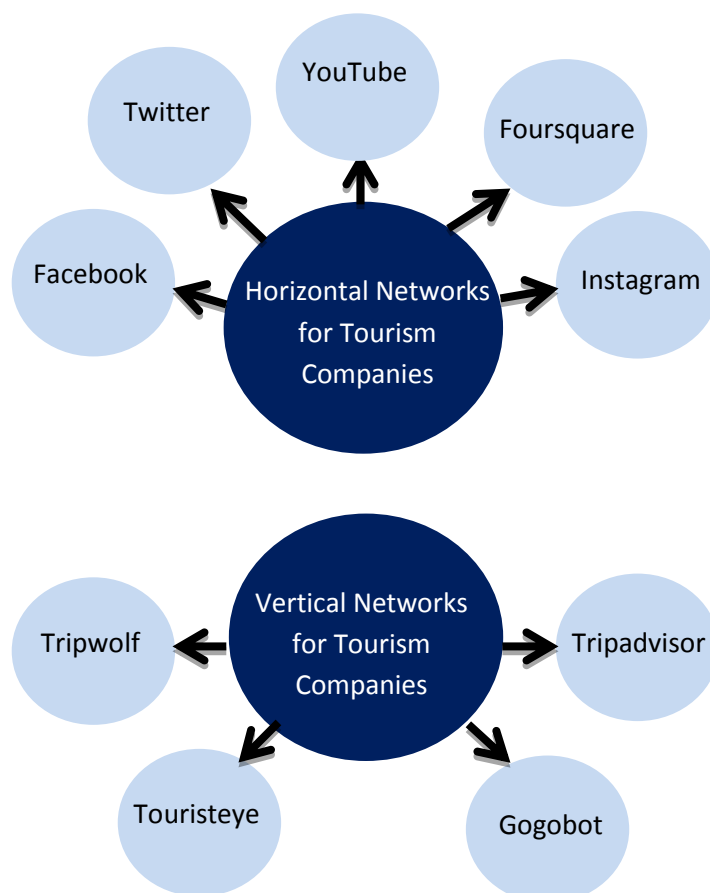
<sup>44</sup> [www.miniclip.com](http://www.miniclip.com)

#### 4. What social networks can I use in my tourism business?

Every social network has specific characteristics regarding operation, communication rules, content type, user profile, and objectives. Therefore it is necessary that you plan your company participation in networks in advance and define your online communication strategy for each one.

Monitoring communication activities that you have started is highly important. This way you can make improvements that will optimize your company's impact through this medium.

The following sections will help you understand how to use the social networks to promote and market your tourism product or service.



## 4.1 Horizontal Social Networks that are useful for the Tourism Business

### 4.1.1 Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social network in the world, with more than a billion users. It allows its users to share content, connect with people, identify with companies, people, places, and events that they are interested in, and shape opinion.

Using this social network, you can:

- Advertise your tourism business, services and products.
- Gain customer loyalty.
- Gain brand presence.
- Create content and an image for your tourism business.
- Generate active dialogue with your clients. Remember that your followers will be the best advocates of your service.
- Expand your target market.

Example	
Restaurants and hotels	Germany
<p><a href="http://www.tropical-islands.de/en">Tropical Islands</a><sup>45</sup> is an entertainment complex in Germany that has hotel accommodation, restaurants and attractions.</p> <p>This Company has a fan page on Facebook that has more than 120.823 followers. Using this medium, the company advertises their activities and travel offers. It is therefore a direct interaction space for both clients and followers.</p>	

Once you have created your page, you have to make users identify with your product, be attracted to the brand and become fans. To do this, the following factors should be considered:

- Quality over quantity. It is better to gain fans because they value the content on the page and they then recommend the page to others instead of simply offering ongoing promotions.

<sup>45</sup><http://www.tropical-islands.de/en>

- Always post comments and opinions that are related to your company.
- Create interesting and original content that promotes participation, interaction among your fans and diffusion on the social network.
- Use the tools that the platform provides: questionnaires, events, announcements, etc.
- Evaluate the results using the page statistics.

Facebook gives companies the ability to create a fan page that, unlike private profiles, provides a more professional presence. Furthermore, these fan pages include several tools that allow you to measure the results from your site.

On [Facebook for business](https://www.facebook.com/facebookforbusiness)<sup>46</sup>, you can obtain information on how to create a page, set up advertisements and applications and connect your website to Facebook. You can also see some successful examples.

You will also find more information in [“5 Essentials for a Tourism Business’s Facebook Page”](http://blog.biglikeco.com/5-essentials-for-a-tourism-businesss-facebook-page/)<sup>47</sup>, and by reading the following guide [“How to use Facebook for business”](http://www.tourismtechnology.com/tourismtechnology/cms/documents/files/Facebook%20for%20Business.pdf)<sup>48</sup>.

Example	
Accommodation	International
<p><b>Example of Facebook applied to the tourism sector.</b></p> <p>The Marriot hotel chain has created a game on Facebook called <a href="#">“My Marriot Hotels”</a> where users can create a restaurant, hire workers and attend to their guests.</p>	

#### 4.1.2 Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging service that allows the users to create text inputs (tweets) of no more than 140 characters.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/facebookforbusiness>

<sup>47</sup> <http://blog.biglikeco.com/5-essentials-for-a-tourism-businesss-facebook-page/>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.tourismtechnology.com/tourismtechnology/cms/documents/files/Facebook%20for%20Business.pdf>

Creating your Twitter profile is a simple process. Once you have your business profile active you must be proactive in communicating (via Tweets) and interact with other users. Your goal should be to have as many followers as possible thanks to your high quality content that is original and interesting for Twitter users.

### Example

#### Restaurants and hospitality

#### Belgium

[Pantone Hotel](http://www.pantonehotel.com/)<sup>49</sup> is a hotel establishment located in Brussels. Using their [Twitter](#)<sup>50</sup> account, they develop active communication with their “followers”, replying to their doubts, and informing them of offers at the establishment and the activities available at the destination.

Twitter is an instant communication tool that allows you to:

- Maintain and update a network of followers, with whom you have direct and immediate access.
- Build up your company brand.
- Distribute information and publicise your company, services and products on different platforms.
- Communicate in real-time. The viral effect of this network is remarkable.
- Access new markets and participate in communities that are of interest for the development of your business.

There are a variety of free tools that you can use to manage your Twitter account. They allow you to programme your Tweets and monitor the results. A few examples of these tools are [Hootsuit](https://hootsuite.com/)<sup>51</sup> or [Tweetdeck](http://tweetdeck.com/)<sup>52</sup>.

On the [Twitter for Business](https://business.twitter.com/)<sup>53</sup> page you can find more information about how to manage your Twitter account in the most efficient way possible.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.pantonehotel.com/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.pantonehotel.com/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://hootsuite.com/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://tweetdeck.com/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://business.twitter.com/>

### 4.1.3 YouTube

This is the most widely used video channel worldwide and the second most used website after Google. Using YouTube, you can create your own business channel where you can store and publish your own visual content.

Example	
Restaurants and hospitality	Germany
<p><a href="http://www.glassberlin.com/">Glass Berlin</a><sup>54</sup> is a restaurant located in City West in Berlin. This establishment is very active on social networks, including Facebook and Twitter. It also has a <a href="http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1jKu3J75_yaR6tJFO1_rPA/feed">Youtube</a><sup>55</sup> channel which serves to advertise their gastronomic offer by using carefully chosen images.</p>	

Remember that to position the videos from your channel on search engines, you have to define them and assign them a number of keywords (tags) related to their content.

YouTube is an ideal platform for presenting tourism products and services, as it allows you to transmit emotions through images.

Your videos do not have to be made by professionals.

In the video content you should include customer experiences, and provide details about your company, your day-to-day business, notable events taking place at your destination, and any other information that may be of interest to the users.

You can find more information about how to use and manage a YouTube channel for your business in this [guide](http://socialmediatoday.com/nialldevitt1/1173141/youtube-business-ultimate-guide)<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.glassberlin.com/>

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1jKu3J75\\_yaR6tJFO1\\_rPA/feed](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1jKu3J75_yaR6tJFO1_rPA/feed)

<sup>56</sup> <http://socialmediatoday.com/nialldevitt1/1173141/youtube-business-ultimate-guide>

#### 4.1.4 Foursquare

Among the geo-location applications, Foursquare is positioning itself as one of the most useful ones in the acquisition of clients and loyalty strategies, especially in the tourism industry.

Foursquare is basically a game that rewards user-loyalty to a location. With Foursquare, users can check-in when they get to different places and attain a series of badges according to a series of parameters, for example:

- Mayor: a person who has most-frequently visited a location.
- Adventurer: a person who has been to more than 10 different places.
- SuperStar: a person who has been to more than 50 different places.
- JetSetter: a person who has been to 5 different airports.

It allows tourism businesses to “activate” their establishment on the tool and devise strategies for the users that check-in there. In addition to these active strategies that the entrepreneur can establish, the users can also interact with one another – giving advice about places where they have checked in (Tips and TO-DOs).

For example, many hotel companies use Foursquare to gain loyalty from their clients. The strategy, as part of the global online strategy, is to give a prize or incentive to guests that check-in or become “mayor” of the hotel.

If you want more information, you can consult the official Foursquare for Business<sup>57</sup> page.

This and other geo-localization social networks are increasingly being used in advertising campaigns.

#### 4.5 Instagram

Instagram is a social network that unites users who have a shared interest of communication through images. Its defining feature is that it incorporates a series of effects that allow users to retouch photos easily from any smartphone. This allows users to produce images with a highly aesthetic quality.

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<sup>57</sup> <http://business.foursquare.com/>



Tourism businesses have several ways of exploiting the potential of this network with over 100 million users worldwide. One of the most successful communication activities used among tourism businesses is the promotion of photography contests on Instagram. Tourism companies ask participants to provide snapshots with a brief account of their experiences in the particular destination. The prize is usually a hotel stay or trip. The potential of this type of competition for tourism businesses is huge.

Example	
Accommodation	International
<p><b>Example of Instagram applied to the tourism sector.</b></p> <p>NH hotels carried out a tourism promotion campaign <a href="#">“NH wake up to a better world”<sup>58</sup></a>. They organised a competition where participants had to send their images, tagged with #wakeuppics.</p>	

If you want more information about this network, consult [“26 Tips for Using Instagram for Business”<sup>59</sup>](#).

## 4.2 Vertical social networks that are useful for the tourism business

As well as the previously mentioned networks, your company can make the most of the **vertical social networks** that specialize in the tourism industry. The most widely used in Europe are the following:

### 4.2.1 Tripwolf

[Tripwolf](#)<sup>60</sup> is the social network with the greatest potential in Europe. Its success is due to the combination of specialized content from recognised tour guides, and information provided through user recommendations.

It is worth pointing out that the page has information on more than 50,000 places and 500,000 tourist attractions. Another advantage that it has for the user is that with the

<sup>58</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NefWt4etGwc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NefWt4etGwc)

<sup>59</sup> [www.socialmediaexaminer.com/instagram-for-business-tips/](http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/instagram-for-business-tips/)

<sup>60</sup> [www.tripwolf.com](http://www.tripwolf.com)

application that can be installed on your phone, it is possible to download customized maps and consult them whenever you want, even if without an internet connection.

#### 4.2.2 Touristeye

[Touristeye](#)<sup>61</sup> network allows the user to plan their trip based on other people's experiences. The application makes suggestions according to the preferences of the user, and the user can then share that information on Facebook and Twitter. It has an extensive database with more than 60,000 places of interest and more than 120,000 hotels.

#### 4.2.3 Gogobot

[Gogobot](#)<sup>62</sup> web stands out because of its integration in other networks, such as Facebook, Foursquare and Instagram. This allows the web to customize user-suggestions more easily. The integration gives users a better experience when planning their trips.

#### 4.2.4 Tripadvisor

The success of [Tripadvisor](#)<sup>63</sup> is based on nourishing its content with feedback from users about their experiences in tourist accommodation. These opinions can be accompanied by photos that allow the potential client to make a more informed decision.

For more complementary material, you can consult the "[Guide to Social Advertising](#)"<sup>64</sup> where you can find more information about the most significant aspects of the leading social media networks.

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<sup>61</sup> [www.touristeye.com](http://www.touristeye.com)

<sup>62</sup> [www.gogobot.com](http://www.gogobot.com)

<sup>63</sup> [www.tripadvisor.co.uk](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk)

<sup>64</sup> [Guide\\_to\\_Social\\_Advertising.pdf](#)

## SUMMARY

Below is a brief summary of what you have learned in this tutorial.

### A typical tourist profile today

This social traveller or tourist 2.0. does not only use the internet and social networks to find information and plan their trip, but they also use these tools when travelling.

### What are social networks?

A social network is an internet website that promotes virtual communities according to individual interests. Social networks unite millions of users, giving them the opportunity to exchange information in a variety of formats with other members of the network.

### How are social networks classified?

According to the target market:

- Horizontal: these are open to participation from anyone.
- Vertical: these are aimed at a specific audience.

According to the subject:

- Human: promote interaction between different users, according to interests and general activities.
- Content: the relationship between users is determined by the published content.

According to the geographic location:

- Sedentary: Are amended in accordance with the content

Nomad: incorporate a component of the geographic location

### What user needs do the social networks satisfy?

- Communication: blogs, forums, etc.
- Collaboration: wikis, social bookmarks, etc.
- Multimedia content: sharing photos, live broadcasts, etc.
- Entertainment: virtual worlds, online games, etc.

## What social networks are best for tourism companies?

### Horizontal networks:

- Facebook: It allows its users to share content, connect with people, identify with companies, people, places, or events that they are interested in, and shape opinion.
- Twitter: Twitter is a microblogging service that allows the users to create text inputs (Tweets) of no more than 140 characters.
- YouTube: using this video channel you can create your own business channel where you can store and publish your own visual content
- Foursquare: is basically a game that rewards user-loyalty to a location.
- Instagram: is a social network that unites users that have a shared interest in communication through images

### Vertical networks:

- Tripwolf: combines specialized content from recognised tour guides and information that is provided through user recommendations.
- Touristeye: combines an improved version of some of the characteristics of other social networks, so the user can plan their trip based on other people's experiences.
- Gogobot: stands out because of its integration in other networks, such as Facebook, Foursquare and Instagram. This allows the web to customize user suggestions more easily.
- Tripadvisor: nourishes its content with feedback from users about their experiences in tourist accommodation.