

FOURSQUARE TO ECLIPSE TWITTER & FACEBOOK MAJOR ALERT FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY

An alert has been issued to the tourism industry with the latest social media phenomenon, Foursquare, set to ignite across Australia, potentially eclipsing Twitter and Facebook.

Foursquare is a tourism destination based game. It allows members to spread information, good and bad, about real businesses and attractions in their local area.

Using GPS it allows users to track the location of their friends. It also becomes a vehicle for encouraging loyalty with points accruing when users visit locations regularly.

Users may end up with the title of Mayor – receiving status in Foursquare, but also presenting a promotional opportunity for enlightened businesses to reward valuable customers.

“This is word of mouth in its purest form - one of the most potent influencers of consumers,” said Laurel Papworth, Australia’s leading social media commentator.

“Social media is not about to fizzle out, despite recent negative publicity around fake Twittering and the use of Facebook by a dangerous criminal.

“Regardless of the 25,000 petitioners who pledged to rescind their Facebook accounts this week, ten million users have signed up for Facebook in the past 10 days. So it’s not going away any time soon,” said Ms Papworth.

In Australia Facebook currently has around 9 million active monthly users, with forecasts for further growth.

Laurel Papworth will be giving an in-depth guide to Foursquare and the many other developments in social media at the upcoming *Tourism Futures* conference in Brisbane, 5 – 7 July.

This is absolute 'must-have' information for anyone involved in marketing a brand or destination in the tourism industry, said Mr Tony Charters, *Tourism Futures* convenor.

"Laurel's presentations will compel everyone to reassess their online presence, as well as giving them a head-start in planning their marketing and communications strategies and budgets for the future."

The *Tourism Futures* Roy Morgan industry survey shows over 50 per cent of respondents from across the industry are using social media for internal communications, and marketing.

"While part of the industry has engaged social media, this is clearly the future of communication and a key decision-making influencer. The entire tourism industry needs to understand and embrace this new space," said Mr Charters.

"The boundaries are being pushed further all of the time, and growth and development in this sector will only be fuelled by new technology such the Apple ipad" said Ms Papworth.

"Having a website isn't the end of the line and tourism businesses should be evolving their online activity to reflect not only what

consumers want to know but where they are online, be it Facebook, twitter, foursquare or at the corporate hub website.”

Tourism Futures is a national conference for tourism professionals and aviation industries. An entire day of the three day event is dedicate to the latest information and forecast about online technology.

A full conference program is available at
www.tourismfutures.com.au

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