

Challenges of ICT adoption and utilisation in small rural restaurants: a case study of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands

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Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become an essential element in the hospitality industry around the world over the past few decades, with particular benefits accruing to restaurant owners. Restaurants within poorer areas, however, often struggle to access the relevant technologies. This article investigates the challenges confronting ICT adoption and utilisation in restaurants in a rural setting. Twelve small restaurants in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa were investigated. The findings indicate large discrepancies between three groups: the top two thriving businesses; the majority group of middle-level enterprises, which exhibited varying levels of success; and the remaining two restaurants, which were clearly struggling to survive. Their success in adoption of ICT corresponded closely in nearly all instances with these success levels. The challenges to adoption and utilisation of ICT were found to centre on cost, owners' lack of familiarity with ICTs, and a corresponding lack of ICT skills amongst staff. The inability of imported software packages to suit local needs also emerged as a significant issue.

Keywords: Hospitality industry; ICT adoption challenges; small and micro-restaurants; rural area development; entrepreneurship.

Introduction

The information and communication technology (ICT) revolution which has been unrolling across America, Europe and some Asian countries over the past several decades has changed the economic landscape and the business environment irrevocably. Not surprisingly, countries that compete effectively in the global marketplace generally enjoy a technological advantage (Samkange and Crouch, 2008). It has been recognised since the beginning of the millennium that businesses in these developed countries have, beyond adoption of ICTs, also demonstrated the ability to adapt, implement, and develop them for best business practice while they also carve niches for themselves in the global marketplace due to improved levels of productivity (Curran & Blackburn, 2001). In contrast, business organisations in less developed countries, including underdeveloped parts of South Africa, continue to struggle technologically, finding it increasingly difficult to compete in a marketplace in which others are highly geared to ICT innovations (Mpofu and Watkins-Mathys, 2011).

The north-south technological divide remains a topical issue attracting much local and international research (Agboh, 2015). However, this division has become diversified and is less clear-cut than it originally appeared (Samkange & Crouch, 2008). Thus South Africa faces an internal digital divide between underdeveloped rural areas and well-developed

cosmopolitan centres like Johannesburg and Pretoria. Moreover, as indicated in this study, the digital divide is also apparent *within* rural contexts.

While several studies have highlighted the significance of ICTs for small to medium enterprises in general (Agboh, 2015; Modimogale 2008; Mutula & Van Brakel, 2007; Tesone, 2006), less research has focussed on the nature, scope and impact of ICT adoption on specific industries (Samkange & Crouch 2008), including the hospitality industry, despite this industry being amongst the first to capitalise on the introduction of ICTs (Wagner & Teixeira, 2014). It is a volatile industry, dependent on finding and developing new mechanisms to distribute its products and services and to communicate up-to-date information to customers in ways that are clearly best enabled by the speed and diversity made available with ICT support. The applications of ICTs for the hospitality industry, as elsewhere, can be grouped into the two major categories of hardware and software (Tesone, 2006) – the hardware involving the computer appliances themselves and the software being the operating systems which vary from highly sophisticated integrated systems costing several hundreds of thousands of rands to more basic applications. ICTs in a restaurant context function both online and offline. Offline applications are largely involved with daily operations within the restaurant itself, for example, printing of daily ‘specials’ to display on the notice board or menu board, and calculations of food costs, profit margins and related sales projections (Nwakanma, Ubani, Asiegbu, and Nwokonkwo, 2014). The online applications, which are the more important (Buergermeister, 2001), are centred on the restaurant’s website. These web based applications, or online applications, constitute a real time interface and booking platform for guests to reserve tables in the comfort of their homes (Tesone, 2006). Daily floor operations such as ‘walk ins’, order taking, web based table booking and web based marketing all combine to define full ICTs utilisation by a restaurant (Baker, Huyton and Bradley, 2006).

Most functions are, and have for some years now, been based on electronic point of sale (EPOS) technology (Zhou, 2004). Sales-related ICT utilisation hinges on the EPOS. As long ago as 2001, Buergermeister analysed the applicability of an EPOS station in restaurant operation in detail. This station, which is computer based, comes as a touch screen unit attached to a cash drawer and linked to one or two printers (the second one being a kitchen printer). Zhou identifies the EPOS as the hub of sales and central point for communication linking the dining room (guests), food production (the kitchen) and back office (the management). Even earlier, David, Grabski and Kasavana, (1996) explained that typical communication flow begins on the floor, which is the dining room. A waiter will take an order on a notepad and punch in the order at the EPOS (which is commonly referred to as ‘ringing the order’). The system then sends the order to the kitchen via the kitchen printer (Wagner and Teixeira, 2014). In addition, it also alerts management of the sale through subtraction of stock from the back office. Back-office systems perform the administrative function of food cost analysis, staff scheduling and inventory and financial controls at the restaurant level (David et al. 1996). The system automatically records and reports on stock levels and alerts the user of stocks that they have reached their re-order level. Food costs percentages can also be computed beforehand and this will assist in pre-costing menus for pricing before they are introduced (Tesone, 2006). The table management systems (e.g. reservation, waiting list management, floor-plan, and table availability) show table status, thus improving the timing of service and speeding up turnarounds (Buergermeister, 2001)

Any establishment which continues to perform all of these functions manually will clearly be at a disadvantage, particularly if others in the region have moved forward in this respect. According to Law and Jogaratnam, (2005), the ability of the EPOS to reduce errors and save time, hence improving customer service quality, satisfaction and personalisation are added benefits. Interfaces with customer databases enable staff to identify customers and call them by their names, thus providing a personalised service which is generally appreciated. The

EPOS also improves communication among departments, from order taking, production of food and service to payment of the bill (Law and Jogaratnam, 2005.).

Consumers have also become increasingly technologically aware and Kock and Koelane, (2013) find that any business not prepared to fully embrace electronic marketing will be left behind. As early as 2003, Ngai advised all businesses to develop a user-friendly website with online promotional techniques and links such as search engines, email contact forms and banner advertising (Ngai, 2003). Other more recent and widely used channels of digital marketing include podcasting, video streaming and blogging. Ngai saw an interactive website as a formidable marketing tool allowing potential customers to get a wealth of information about the products or services they require. Already in 2008, businesses were increasingly investing in three types of digital marketing: online videos (e.g. YouTube), social networks (Facebook, Twitter and MySpace), and mobile technology (e.g. Blackberry and iPhones) (Chester & Montgomery, 2008). However, most of the restaurant websites examined for this research are still basic and do not offer interactive interfaces, a challenge that still needs to be addressed.

The purpose of this paper is to examine ICT utilization within the specific context of a developing country and of a developing area of that country that displays some first world characteristics and to explore to what extent ICT adoption is a factor in developing a successful restaurant business. First, consideration will be given to the advantages of ICT adoption for restaurant requirements such as floor (or sales) operations and marketing and publicity functions, along with effective installment of private communications systems and measures to ensure the safety of customers. The difficulties facing restaurateurs who wish to succeed in ICT installation and utilization within this rural context will then be reviewed in the light of the relevant literature and the findings of the study. Lastly, recommendations for addressing some of the sticking points in implementation will be considered.

Methodology

The research methodology for this study involved a case study design which was grounded in a qualitative and interpretive approach. In order to build a rich picture of the significance of ICT adoption within a variety of different establishments occupying a specific rural area in South Africa which is well known to the principal researcher, multiple data collection methods were employed. These involved structured and semi-structured interviews conducted with the owners of four of the restaurants ranging from the most to the least successful; questionnaires, which were completed by all twelve participating restaurateurs in order to gain a wider focus; observations, in order to check the apparent success of individual establishments independently of the owners; and document and website analysis for further cross-checking of the evidence.

Questionnaires were distributed to all participating restaurants in rural KwaZulu-Natal for completion. Respondents were given four weeks to complete the questionnaires and collection was done in person at an agreed date. Where websites had been developed, these were reviewed in detail during data collection. Permission was sought from restaurant managers and owners of restaurants to spend some time observing their systems in place as well as how they used them; notes were taken during these observations. During the time when questionnaires were still with respondents, the researcher analysed the website of the Midlands Meander (a tourism association in the Midlands), its guide (in print form) and individual participating restaurants' websites and their marketing documents, in order to establish their ICT adoption level. The term 'small restaurants' was taken to refer to restaurants with either one or two dining rooms and with a total sitting capacity of not more than 30 customers.

For the purpose of this research, three areas namely, Curry's Post, Lions River and Nottingham Road, were chosen as they broadly represent the whole Midlands area. The three research areas are located between the two small towns of Howick and Mooi River, which fall under the Umngeni and Mooi-Mpofana local municipalities respectively, both being within the uMgungundlovu District of KwaZulu-Natal Province. Two restaurants are expensive establishments attached to boutique hotels, one being part of an international chain. The others are all 'stand-alone' restaurants. Eight have been grouped together and can be classified as averagely priced or middle level, while two struggle to keep afloat financially. These last two are also the most modestly priced, providing only basic services.

Most of the restaurants (nine out of twelve) are easily accessible as their access roads are tarred. The other three are situated along untarred roads, which are nevertheless quite accessible by car. One of the twelve suffers from severe access problems during the rainy season as the bridge leading to it has on occasion been washed away by the floods which are characteristic of the area. (The manager of another of the restaurants also found, however, that his more demanding guest complained about the surrounding roads as being unsuitable for their type of cars – a Porsche being specifically mentioned). It was concluded, however, that difficulty of access would not account for discrepancies in business success levels.

Findings

The findings of the study are reflected in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Adoption of ICT facilities by three groupings of restaurants in the Midlands

	First Class/ Upmarket Restaurants	Averagely Priced Restaurants		Inexpensive Restaurants
	Thriving	Thriving	Not thriving	Not thriving
<i>Number of restaurants</i>	2	4	4	2
Part of a national or international chain	50%	0%	0%	0%
ICT competent staff	100%	50%	0%	0%
POS package adopted	100%	100%	25%	50%
Website developed	100%	100%	50%	50%
Availability of Wi-Fi for guests	100%	25%	0%	0%
Speed point facilities available	100%	100%	100%	100%
HD TV available for guests	100%	100%	100%	100%
Electronic security features in place	100%	100%	0%	50%
PMS systems installed	100%	0%	0%	0%
Established for three years or longer	100%	75%	50%	100%

Table 1 above shows ICT facilities adopted by restaurants in all three case areas presented within four columns according to level of expense and facilities offered by the establishment. It can be noted that all twelve restaurants have high definition plasma television units and audio systems for entertainment, such as viewing of live sports matches. All restaurants also have credit card facilities; eight have point of sale systems but only two out of the twelve have a full Property Management System (PMS). The less thriving businesses have fewer ICT features but not uniformly.

Characteristics of the top two restaurants: The two restaurants with PMS are, predictably, the two most thriving establishments. Both are restaurants within 'boutique' hotels and both are situated in Nottingham Road. Additional data from both observation and interviews with the owners further confirmed that these are the most successful establishments in the region. They also cater for the wealthier segment of the population.

According to the manager of one of these restaurants:

The nature of our operation requires accurate food and beverage management through good stock management, revenue management, and sound financial management, hence one requires a system that integrates all these tasks to effectively manage your restaurant. PMS packages are the way to go these days hence we adopted this system.

This manager also gave the story of his restaurant since its inception five years before as follows:

In our case, we converted an old farm house about 5 years ago into a small intimate restaurant with one kitchen, one dining room, and a few garden tables set outside if the weather is good. When we started we only had a simple till (cash register) and everything was done manually. Over the past few years we have adopted every necessary ICT from POS, security systems, HD TVs, through to speedpoint facilities. We decided to return most of the profits into the business in an effort to make it viable and competent in the long run hence we are here today

The evidence from this restaurant suggests that management characteristics, such as skills, background knowledge, experience and attitude, play a major role both in the success achieved over time and in determining ICT adoption. Another illustration of a wise management decision taken by one of the two most successful hoteliers during a face-to-face interview is provided in the following comment:

The idea of wireless internet connection came up following several requests from guests, mostly those coming from overseas with laptops. Several of them have come here asking for wireless internet connection for their laptops and we then decided to set up the wireless hotspot internet and Wi-Fi access here, besides everything is now dependent on technology. We manage the whole restaurant on a PMS. Point of Sale systems and credit card facilities are all important tools to have as 90% of our clients come from abroad where such systems are basic in any business there.

Characteristics of the middle-range restaurants: The implications from these restaurants appeared to be that you can start small – but need to develop (with increasing use of ICT support) from there. Three averagely priced restaurants mentioned that it is expensive to share internet with guests as they use 3G connectivity and that the cost of data bundles from mobile network operators is soaring, given the fact that data packages are capped. However, according to a Lions River, middle-ranked, restaurant owner:

It is costly to set up a viable internet connectivity system for guest use, the way to go is acquire satellite internet like we have done here. It is uncapped, fast and reliable so we offer it free of charge to all our guests via Wi-Fi. The monthly subscription is quite affordable, the benefits of having Wi-Fi outweigh the costs of running it. It is one of our strategies of increasing guest satisfaction.

It is interesting to note that the middle-ranking establishments that adopted fewer ICT are doing relatively less well, but some are clearly more successful than others. It is therefore suggested by the findings that full ICT adoption has positive results (while it can of course equally be argued that being the richest has enabled only these establishments to afford the full suite of technology available). The least viable restaurants have not taken (or not been in a position to take) full advantage of ICTs and yet they are not far behind the middle rank of restaurants in their level of adoption – indicating again that more complex issues are often at stake than can be addressed by ICT adoption alone.

Apart from full adoption of ICTs by the four more successful amongst the middle range of restaurants, there are other factors such as either star grading (providing confidence to prospective clients), or being owner managed (ensuring that the management are fully committed to the business), or having 'chain affiliation' (ensuring ongoing support and advice from the group) which helped to distinguish them from the four less successful ones. These additional factors therefore appear to complement the full adoption of ICTs in determining success of these rural restaurants.

Characteristics of less successful restaurants: An interview with the manager of one of the less successful middle-ranking restaurants revealed that he is unable to employ ICT qualified staff or to acquire expensive ICT hardware and software for his small restaurant. He explained that he will keep employing waiters without specific IT skills for now as his manual system of restaurant management is working fairly well for him. His case is, however, a peculiar one in which he is able to 'piggy back' on the facilities offered by larger, and more ICT-compliant restaurants in the region, who use his facilities for the entertainment of their overnight wedding guests.

Most of the managers interviewed (seven out of the 12) mentioned that the engagement of high technology security systems such as CCTV cameras and alarms for armed response were prompted by vulnerability of their clients late at night. It may be interesting to note that the less successful restaurants of the middle rank had not taken this step, perhaps being more focused on immediate profits than on longer term goals. However, as one of the more successful managers who had installed a security system noted, 'patrons could fall prey to criminals as they leave the restaurants, involving the need for cameras everywhere'.

Discussion

The pattern shown by results above therefore suggests that the more successful the restaurant is, the more ICTs they adopt and vice versa – the more ICT adoption that occurs the more successful the restaurant becomes. ICT adoption alone, however, could not fully account for the level of success of these businesses.

Adoption of ICT facilities: The factors affecting successful adoption of ICTs, according to MacGregor and Vrazalic, (2006), are both socio-economic and technological. Herselman, (2003) illustrates socio-economic challenges with specific references to rural South Africa, where frequently the majority of the population live below subsistence levels and remain impoverished, in part due to lack of access to the basic infrastructure required for economic growth and development. Ngwenyama and Morawczynski, (2007) also point to geographical

disparities in the country with specific reference to ICT adoption. The rural areas have no proper address systems and fixed telephone connectivity is still a significant problem although cell phone usage is high. This shortage of fixed lines explains the below-average usage of broadband internet access and networking protocols recorded in remote areas generally.

The main focus might therefore be expected to be on the acquisition and development of basic infrastructure rather than ICT adoption. However, ICT can also involve the means of mitigating infrastructural challenges. All three major mobile networks (MTN, Vodacom, and Cell C) were found to be in use by all twelve restaurants in this study, while only four out of the twelve restaurants have fixed-line telephones. Three of the managers interviewed explained that they had given up on fixed lines as they are frequently faulty due to cable theft. Mobile phone technology provides immediate contact with customers and is in widespread use in the industry. Internet connectivity is therefore not a serious stumbling block to ICT adoption in this rural area.

However, rural KwaZulu-Natal shares with most remote African contexts (Dogbe, 2015) a lack of knowledge about the strategic use of ICT amongst the population and this has been recognised as one of the primary barriers to adoption within the hospitality industry in less developed areas (Martin, 2005). Martin explains that this limitation to adoption is due to the fact that the owner, who usually manages the business and who takes the executive decisions, is seldom well versed in ICT. The owner or manager's limitations consequently become the limitations of the business. That this remains the case within the area researched was confirmed by the findings of the study. Small establishments' adoption of ICTs necessarily requires a particular skills base amongst both management and staff. Mutula and Van Brakel, (2007), in their empirical study conducted in Botswana, noted the lack of necessary IT skills as a serious barrier to ICTs adoption by small businesses there (restaurants included). Here again, the adoption of ICTs by small operations largely depended on the owner or manager's ICT skills and attitude towards technology.

Technology is constantly evolving, getting smarter, faster and more powerful (Ngwenyama and Morawczynski, 2007) and the dynamic nature of the ICT environment is a further limitation to adoption, requiring users to constantly re-learn, adapt, and update their technologies (MacGregor and Vrazalic, 2006). The owner managers and the staff therefore need to have not only the initial skills but also to be motivated to accept and embrace change as well as to be excited enough to maintain an interest in the changes as they unfold. Beyond infrastructural and educational challenges, the high setup cost and lack of capital is, according to Herselman, (2003), the most significant barrier to adoption, and findings from the current study confirm that this is still the case. Eight out of the twelve establishments researched identified the initial capital outlay for full ICT adoption as extremely high and therefore currently unaffordable. Herselman, (2003) also found that ICT costs may be omitted entirely from the budgets of small business owners for that reason. He identifies a range of costs associated with ICTs including tools (hardware), software, connectivity, maintenance and other hidden costs, such as license fees for software and programs and upgrade fees.

Adoption challenges highlighted by operators

The most significant challenges identified by the research with regard to adoption and utilisation of ICTs were, firstly, expense, followed by incapacity of the owners themselves to adopt complex systems due to their own ignorance of information technology, along with a lack of skills amongst their staff to run and maintain the systems. In addition, imported software packages were often found to be unsuited to local needs.

Results from the interviews conducted also suggest that the size of the establishment matters when it comes to ICTs adoption or any significant capital injection decisions.

According to a Lions River restaurant manager some ICT components will not be appropriate for small restaurants:

In my opinion packages like PMS are irrelevant to us small operators in that we are quite small to want full computerised systems, besides it is only us owners and three other employees working here. We got a quotation from a popular PMS supplier based in Durban. Guess how much it costs to fully computerise our restaurant? R181654.50! This is just for three point of sale systems linked to one back office, kitchen printer, and also linked to the front office for bill payments on checking out. The figure does not include monthly software licence fee of about R500.

His explanations point out the imbalance on outlay cost versus benefits accrued from the investment until restaurants reach a certain size. Most restaurant operators (nine out of 12) indicated that ICTs are expensive for them to buy, install and maintain. They are also aware that modern ICTs become obsolete quickly and that upgrading is costly.

Restaurant operators also highlighted lack of skills among staff and management to use even basic ICTs. A Curry's Post manager confirmed this and also introduced the aspect of local language issues. He said:

To start with we are not even well informed on how those ICTs operate. None of my employees is that educated to run a PMS or POS. Most of my employees are Zulu literate and these packages are offered only in English which make them not user friendly as the interface is only available in one language which is English and not vernacular.

Lack of knowledge of how to operate the modern ICTs was pointed out by most of the restaurants who were lagging behind. This weakness appeared, however, sometimes to result from ignorance of the actual adoption benefits and/or to a lack of passion for the industry. For instance, one manager explained that he inherited the business from his parents and it is now his source of livelihood, but he is a farmer by profession and that means his passion is for farming and not hospitality. Perhaps significantly, he also explained that he saw the benefits of full adoption of ICT systems as outweighed by the costs of their acquisition and maintenance. This opinion was strongly challenged by managers of the two most thriving restaurants, who credited full adoption for the success of their restaurants.

It may thus be concluded that the adoption and utilisation of ICTs in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands, as a representative rural area within a developing country, is prevalent amongst the most thriving establishments. The less successful often lack a full understanding of the benefits of ICTs, although they acknowledge that most business operations in any sector are now increasingly reliant upon ICTs. It can also be concluded that ICT adoption is necessarily a transitional revolution, one that may start at inception (or the establishment of the restaurant) and go through developmental stages, being ideally updated regularly when changes emerge in the ICTs markets and as the business grows.

The implications of the research findings are therefore that there is a serious need for multifaceted strategies to enhance the ability of small restaurants to adopt and fully utilise ICTs

Strengths and limitations of the study

The principal researcher is employed within this industry and works within this geographical area. He therefore has first-hand knowledge and personal experience on which to draw. The study had both the strengths and limitations inherent in a case study in that triangulation between various research instruments was possible – but the research was confined within one area of one Province. The results therefore cannot be generalised although the authors

believe that some lessons can be learned and that the findings will be of interest to stakeholders in other establishments within similar contexts. It is recommended that a wider study involving a greater range of restaurants from rural areas throughout South Africa be undertaken in order to further verify and extend the study.

Recommendations

It is recognised that most software operating systems are developed overseas and that it would not be possible to have these translated into local South African languages. It is also the case that software application development is limited within South Africa but with new enterprises emerging, such as the Durban University of Technology's 'Software Factory', more local applications become possible. These designers should consider developing application software and interfaces in the three major vernacular languages in South Africa (IsiZulu; SiSotho and Xhosa). This development would motivate local staff to operate ICTs such as EPOS as they will be offered in a language easy for them to understand. As this is an expensive exercise, however, associations such as the Midlands Meander Association could approach software developers on behalf of their members. Such associations could have a specific software developed (in the vernacular) and purchase its rights and distribute to member on a shared-cost basis. Hardware manufacturers (computer technology manufacturers) could also be approached to consider introducing into the South African market more affordable entry level point of sale systems for small and starting restaurants. These could be basic systems that would enable small restaurants to operate almost as efficiently as restaurants with sophisticated ICTs if they were to include mobile point of sale system, portable back office applications (stock management system) and the associated computers. The numbers of restaurants operating at this level in both urban and rural settings in South Africa, as in other developing countries, could make this a viable option for the manufacturers.

Associations and local hospitality commissions, for example, the Howick Umngeni Tourism Commission and the Midland Meander Association, should promote the adoption of ICTs by their member restaurants. They should encourage members to embrace ICTs for the benefit of each individual business and the association in general. These tourism and hospitality organisations are also in a good position to implement sponsored ICT courses. For example, the Midlands Meander Association is already starting to source sponsors to pay half, or fully, towards short course programmes for hospitality operators and their staff members. The same could be done for ICT courses for staff and owner operators in the region. Corporate sponsors like the N3 Toll Concession may also be willing to sponsor such short courses as they have sponsored similar courses in customer service in the past.

Finally hospitality boards/sector representatives are advised to lobby for financial institutions to make funds or credit available at affordable repayment interests for ICTs adoption by small establishments in the hospitality sector.

Regarding publicity that can be achieved through websites, 'this is an area that is massively overlooked by many organizations' (Dogbe, 2016). In the opinion of this specialist in this field, the most successful websites are those where, once in operation, the business concentrates on driving traffic to them.

There are a number of techniques that could be employed for this important exercise of building and growing a social profile through all social engineering websites like facebook, twitter and tumblr. The key is to attract a niche market not just anyone but people that are willing to come and eat in your restaurant. Most businesses retain followers by re-blogging popular news in that niche or viral content. This methodology is guaranteed to have many people clicking the like buttons and re-sharing it on the web and mobile technologies like whatsapp and so on. Also people tend to trust you when you have a huge following. The re-sharing of viral content allows more people to see the content coming from your website, which is commonly referred to as directing traffic to your website (Dogbe, 2016)

Overall, therefore, restaurants are encouraged to start small, that is to invest in entry level technologies affordable to their small operations and to adopt more sophisticated ICTs as business improves. Initial cost outlay for a complete POS in a restaurant with at least three pay stations is expensive. Evidence from the research confirms that such costs are unaffordable by most operators in an area like the Midlands but that, if they reach the equivalent of 'five star' status, these become an important asset

Conclusion

While a range of other entrepreneurial skills was found to influence the successful management and development of these small businesses, it can be concluded that awareness of the benefits of ICT adoption, along with adequate support mechanisms to allow for their successful adoption (some requiring interventions beyond the individual businesses concerned) have become an essential element in their sustained growth and success. The objectives of the study were therefore met in that the challenges as well as the possibilities of ICT adoption by these businesses were illuminated, providing for the encouragement of both local and international tourism within this beautiful rural area of South Africa. It is therefore hoped that entrepreneurs may be encouraged to see this as an increasingly viable business option within the current context of a weak rand which provides particularly favourable opportunities for local tourism.

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