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PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS TO JAPANESE TOURISTS IN THE CNMI

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If cultural heritage tourism in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall succeed as a viable entity, visitors need to be aware of the cultural and historic attractions available to them. This paper examines the sources from which Japanese tourists obtained the required information. It demonstrates that printed matter, especially guidebooks, feature prominently, but also that much of the information about cultural and historic attractions is obtained *after* arrival. An examination of a series of magazines provided free-of-charge to tourists showed that cultural and historic attractions were only rarely included in the coverage.

If cultural heritage tourism in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall succeed as a viable entity, visitors need to be aware of the cultural and historic attractions available to them. Elsewhere we have examined the extent to which Japanese tourists were aware of the cultural and historical attributes and sites of the CNMI (Sayers & Spennemann 2006c) and how they responded to them (Sayers & Spennemann 2006a). Awareness, however, requires access to information about the attractions. In this paper we will examine and explore the sources from which Japanese tourists obtained the required information.

CONTEXT

The role travel agents play in helping customers make travel decisions is declining (cf. ATC 2002, p. 14) and that of other sources is increasing, such as the world wide web (Cheyne *et al.* 2006), location placement in movies

(Tooke & Baker 1996; Busby & Klug 2001) and television shows (Beeton 2001), reporting in television travel programmes (Fürsich 2002; Mahmood 2005; Spennemann *et al.* 2007); articles in newspapers and magazines (cf. Williams and Shaw 1995; Spennemann *et al.* 2007); as well as the emerging field of interactive television (Morgan *et al.* 2001).

Other literature has explored the role of public imagery in brochures (cf. Ateljevic and Doorne 2002) and on postcards as tools for advertising and creating a demand for visitation (Markwick 2001).

Methodologically, all studies into information sources need to take into account the segmentation of the market both along the international/domestic divide as well as within the segments. Backpackers, for example, source their information differently from retirees or professionals (Hanlan & Kelly 2005).

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However, there is little published work on Japanese information seeking behaviour. Nichimura (2004) found that guidebooks were most heavily used information source. The use of this guidebooks was closely related to the decisions about 'activities,' 'places to visit,' 'meals' and 'shopping' prior to and during travel. Other sources, such as word-of-mouth, the internet, and tour guides were either less used or perceived as less useful.

Nishimura *et al.* 2006 followed this up with another study looking at the guidebooks needs during and after study, trying to illuminated the use and non-use of such media.

THIS STUDY

The aim of this paper is two-fold: firstly, to identify the main sources of information on attractions in the in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands accessed by Japanese Tourists *before* they arrived on Saipan. Secondly, the paper will examine the nature of information available *while on island*. These findings will be able to highlight the main travel information resources that are used, so that effective promotional and educational materials can be targeted to the source that the majority of the respondents access and utilise. As with previous papers on the Japanese visitor experience in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) (Sayers & Spennemann 2006a–c), the data drawn upon were collected during fieldwork in July and August 2001. In addition, data provided by the Marianas Visitor Authority as part of their ongoing data collection were also utilised.

MARIANAS VISITOR AUTHORITY FINDINGS

All arriving visitors are required to complete an arrival questionnaire for CNMI Customs. The questionnaire requires the respondents to provide their age, gender, occupation, home country and port of embarkation details, along with travel mode and purpose. The reverse of the customs form contains a visitor information questionnaire administered by the Marianas Visitor Authority (MVA). The completion of that part of form is voluntary, but as the signature line for the customs declaration is on the bottom of that page, most visitors will feel

compelled to completed the visitor information questionnaire.

One question on the visitor information questionnaire asks 'What convinced you to travel to CNMI?' The MVA data demonstrate that about half percent of the responses were selected from the options related to 'climate,' 'short flight time,' 'price,' or 'other' (July 51.2%, n=27859; August 48.7%, n=23,651). Excluding these responses from the analysis and looking only at the sources of information, we note that 'travel agents' were the main source for about 30% of the respondents during the months of July and August (Table 1). Experiences garnered during a previous trip are also very powerful sources convincing people to come for a (repeat) visit. The next grouping is comprised of 'friends/relatives,' 'flyers/posters' and 'magazines,' each ranging in the lower teens. The lowest response was generated by the options of 'newspaper,' 'TV/radio and 'general reading' with a combined total of only 3.1% to 3.2% (Table 1).

Table 1. Travel sources (Source: MVA Data)

	July 2001		August 2001	
	n	%	n	%
Travel Agents	4,390	32.3	3678	30.3
Previous Trip	2,905	21.4	2,839	23.4
Friends/Relatives	2,452	18.0	1958	16.1
Flyer/Poster	1,777	13.1	1743	14.4
Magazines	1,656	12.2	1517	12.5
General Reading	148	1.1	148	1.2
Newspaper	143	1.1	123	1.0
TV/Radio	127	0.9	120	1.0
	13,598		12,126	

While the MVA 'travel source' categories provide an overview of the travel sources that the respondents accessed to find out about the islands, the data are too coarse-grained to permit an examination of the roles played by cultural attractions.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

The promotional literature that is available to visitors both prior to their arrival and after their arrival on the islands, is fairly extensive.

Given that interested individuals are likely to follow-up with a direct approach to the MVA for further information, a request simu-

lating a specific tourist enquiry was made. That request specifically asked for cultural and heritage information about the islands, five brochures/maps were sent. These items are also available from the MVA and can be obtained from that office both prior to and after arrival.

The cover letter that was included with the information provided a description of the islands and their location. Although the request was made for cultural information, a standard information pack was with generic cover letter was returned. The only reference to cultural information was in one brochure (Figure 1, Figure 2), while the cover letter described the imagery of the islands and stated that:

“The enticing climate of the Marianas is tropical marine with very little variation in temperature. White sandy beaches and blossoming orange flame trees contrast the blue Pacific, which surrounds all”.

Such imagery is reflective of many brochures that are produced by tourist destinations in an attempt to influence people to visit. The imagery that is used here is correct, as the islands so offer these elements, but such imagery does little to appeal to cultural heritage tourists who seek ‘authenticity’ and the chance to experience something out of their everyday routine (Wirosardjono 1993). Silberberg (1995 p) defines cultural tourism, as

“visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution”.

Based on this definition, the imagery that is used in the MVA cover letter is in direct contrast with the interests of cultural tourists as described here. The ‘History and Culture’ brochure that was sent as part of the information package (Figure 1Figure 2), details the history of the islands and explains the traditions of the Chamorro and Carolinian peoples. This brochure also features photographs of the Chamorro and Carolinian people in traditional dress and involved in the production of handicrafts.

The brochure provides a reasonable, if eulogistic synopsis of the culture and history of

the Northern Marianas. Such treatment is reasonable, given that we are dealing with a promotional brochure. Overall, the synopsis covered the history from the pre-contact period to the Commonwealth status.

The remaining brochures in the information pack comprise ‘general information’ and ‘where to eat’ information, along with two maps – one of the island of Saipan and the other of Tinian. These brochures have images of food and island amenities throughout them, whilst the maps contain information about the history of the islands and the attractions that are found on each.

The promotional material is quite extensive overall, with the information relating to the cultural heritage of the islands confined to one brochure. This amount of information does not provide an extensive insight into the culture of the islands, yet the coverage is quite comprehensive for an information brochure.

When this information is compared to the Micronesia handbook (Stanley 1989), comparison can be made between the images and descriptions of the elements of the islands. The Micronesia Handbook provides detailed information about the islands and shows images of the Chamorro and Carolinian people in a less stereotypical way compared to the brochures.

FIELDWORK FINDINGS

The fieldwork period took place on Saipan over a four-week period during the months of July and August 2001 (Sayers 2001). A structured questionnaire comprising pre-coded and open-ended questions was administered to departing visitors in the secure departure area of Saipan International Airport. Passengers sampled in this area had passed immigration and security checks and were waiting for their flight to commence boarding.¹ The questionnaire was available in both English and Japanese.

In total 830 questionnaires were collected during the fieldwork period. 699 (84.2%) of the respondents provided their home country details, 705 (84.9%) provided gender details, 693 (83.4%) provided their age category.



some locations. Exactly how these huge monoliths were quarried, transported and erected is still a subject of debate.

Chamorros were described by the first western chroniclers as extremely ingenious in their creation of artifacts for daily living. They crafted dwellings, tools and ornamentation from what the land offered. Made of stone, wood and vegetation, Chamorro houses were cool, well ventilated and clean. Their canoes and fishing implements were sturdy and attractive. They were consummate weavers of coconut and pandanus, and their weapons, with spear points made of human femur bones, were deadly.

Unlike the physical remnants of ancient Chamorro society, some cultural and social values exert influence even today. Chamorro life revolves around family and clan. Intertribal and family feuds were a common source of friction in ancient times, and today family loyalty figures prominently in both politics and business. Though all but wiped out by the arrival of western religion, ancient Chamorro beliefs in a spiritual animism still persist. Myths and legends about the Tactomonas, or "little people" are still told to children, and there is an entire protocol to be observed in respect for the ancient spirits who are believed to live in the jungle areas or "boonies," as they are now called.

One of the most charming aspects of family life in these islands is the fiesta. Fiestas are thrown for almost any reason: Births, baptisms, religious holidays, weddings, you name it. It is here that everyone is welcome, and the hospitality of the Chamorro and Carolinian people really shines. In the sharing of food, drink and gossip, one can be transported back to old village life. It is the good fortune of visitors today that the most enduring and endearing traits of the Chamorro people are their warmth, generosity and Hafa Adai spirit.

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Culture

The fact that the Chamorros were able to sail across vast distances from their ancestral home to the Mariana Islands 3500 years ago attests to their seafaring abilities. Ancient Chamorros were also accomplished fishermen. Ferdinand Magellan first witnessed Chamorros using the proa, a narrow double-ended log-beam canoe, outfitted with an outrigger and a lateen sail woven of coconut palm leaves. In these sturdy craft, they ventured to sea where they caught flying fish on hooks made of fish bone and clam shell.

Equally adept at agriculture, Chamorros cultivated or harvested yams, potatoes, birds, octopus, crabs, turtles, fruit bats, sugar cane, breadfruit, bananas and coconuts. Women wore their hair long and dressed it with coconut oil, men shaved their heads, except for a tied topknot, and most wore hats woven from coconut fronds for protection from the sun, and little else in the way of clothing.



The ancient Chamorros were a stone age society, and the only enduring artifacts we see today of their works are latte stones. Quarried from limestone bedrock, latte stones are large, conical columns topped by a bowl-shaped capstone. It is generally believed that these were transported from quarry to building site, erected and used as foundation blocks for important structures. Today on all of the islands there are excellent remains of latte stone quarries as well as standing stones in



Figure 2. Information brochure on Mariana Islands History and Culture produced by the Marinas Visitors Authority (internal section)

Of the 699 respondents who provided their home country details, an overwhelming 671 (95.9%) stated that their home country was Japan. Table 2 sets out total sample population by age and gender compared to the MVA arrival data.

Table 2. Age/gender data of the Japanese sample population compared to the MVA arrival data

Fieldwork			MVA Arrival Data		
Age	M	F	Age	M	F
18-25	9.4	25.1	18-24	6.1	15.4
26-30	16.6	21.7	25-29	15.9	22.2
31-40	40.4	36.6	30-39	33.6	32.0
41-50	23.8	12.6	40-49	25.3	17.2
51-60	6.3	3.1	50-59	12.5	7.5
60+	3.4	0.9	60+	6.7	5.8
N	319	350	N	23,893	26,021

Was information accessible?

As outlined elsewhere (Sayers & Spennemann 2006a), participants responded positively to the assertion “Information was readily available to me regarding the history of the islands.” Almost half the respondents agree with that assertion (Figure 3), with the largest group of respondents choosing the ‘don’t know answer’ suggesting that by not knowing they had not attempted to access that kind of information. Women tended to be likely to respond that they could access information as were the extremes of the age classes (18-25 years of age and 51-60/60+), even though these differences were not statistically significant.

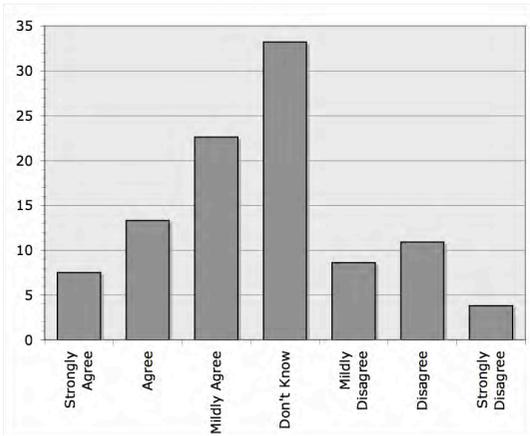


Figure 3. Frequency of responses to the assertion “Information was readily available to me regarding the history of the islands”

The visitor statistics collected by the MVA, as well as the demographics of the sample surveyed as part of the research reported here show that the majority of Japanese travel as part of organised groups.

To examine the role and utility of tour guides, participants were asked to respond to the assertion that “I was able to access tour guides to inform me about the islands.” More than half of the respondents agree with that assertion (Figure 4), again with the largest group of respondents choosing the ‘don’t know answer’. Women tended to be more likely to respond that they could access information as were some of the age classes (18-25 years of age and 41-50; 60+), even though none of these differences were statistically significant.

Sources of information

The data collected focussed on discovering *how* the respondents learnt about specific elements. In total 830 respondents provided information on *how* they learnt about various aspects and attractions of the CNMI. A high percentage of visitors indicated that they were unaware of these aspects and attractions. These responses range from 9.3% for World War II relics to 43.4% for Carolinian culture and history. For the data provided in Table 3 all responses indicating ‘I do not know about it’ have been omitted and the percentages recalculated. The level of ‘don’t know’ answers is examined elsewhere (Sayers & Spennemann 2006c).

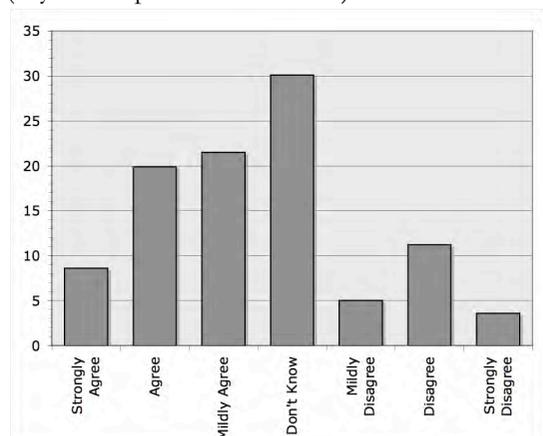


Figure 4. Frequency of responses to the assertion “I was able to access tour guides to inform me about the islands”

The main travel information source that the respondents used to access information, were guide-books (Table 3). This finding shows that the reliance on guide-books is substantial. It must be noted that Japanese people sometimes refer to maps as guidebooks (Duenas, M. 2001, pers.comm.) and therefore this must be considered when looking at the responses. The findings are still similar however, as the reliance on this form of information still reflects the same type of travel source being accessed. All of the responses for the guide-book option were relatively high, with the specific elements of each theme – culture/history and nature rating lower than the generic elements such as ‘the history of the islands’.

The rating of the internet was quite low for each element. In 2001 the MVA undertook steps to update their web pages so that information can be accessed by internet users (Figure 5). This update included languages other than English and Japanese as the MVA believe that potential visitors to the CNMI are accessing information from the internet. This assertion is not reflected in the fieldwork data however, which shows that less than 5% got information about the components through this medium. This may be a result of the low uptake of the world-wide web in 2001, or may be a function of the specific Japanese market.

‘Newspaper’ was the least selected option as a travel information source. Although the MVA and fieldwork questions for these categories are not the same, some parallels can be made. The low fieldwork data response rates for this option correlate with the MVA findings (Table 3), even though the findings focus on different source aspects. It can be concluded that the source ‘newspaper,’ regardless of what information is provided, was the least utilised travel information source used by the respondents.

The ‘tourist agency’ option reflects low response rates for the fieldwork data and this is in direct contrast to the MVA data (Table 3). This may be due to the fact respondents do not rely on tourist agencies for specific travel information, but rather just for travel destination information. This conclusion can be drawn if the results are compared to the ‘guide-

book’ option that so many respondents indicated as being an information source. The travel source options that have been discussed based on the MVA data are more generic compared to the fieldwork data options.

The ‘Last Japanese Command Post’ option also reflected a high level of awareness (34.3%) pertaining to the ‘guidebook’ option. This finding shows a correlation between World War Two attractions/relics and the level of respondent awareness for such elements. The remaining World War Two tourist attractions also showed high ratings of 19.6% to 26.5% (Table 3). The latte site, the House of Taga, showed the lowest level of respondent awareness for the tourist attractions, with (39%) of respondents indicating that they did not know about it.

‘Friends and family,’ ‘school’ and ‘television,’ when compared to the remaining travel information sources, all show low ratings of less than 6%, indicating that these sources are fairly redundant. Although the ratings are low, it must be mentioned that there is a Visitor Information Channel that broadcasts a comprehensive range of island activities throughout the day and night, presented in Japanese. Some of the respondents, when indicating ‘television’ as a source of information may therefore have been referring to this television channel when providing their answer.

The ‘Museum’ option again recorded the lowest level of awareness for the tourist attractions (34.1%). This finding, along with the low rating for the Japanese Hospital (35.8%) directly correlates with the previous discussion about the Museum in the previous section.

The option ‘after arrival’ is also of interest as a relatively low number of respondents indicated that they had learnt about the elements this way. When the responses from the option ‘after arrival’ for Question 7 (Table 3) are compared to this option of ‘after arrival’ the findings are similar.

The options that show a relatively low response rate are fairly uniform, with the exception of ‘World War Two’ and the ‘Colonial history’ options. These elements show that a higher proportion of the respondents stated that they learnt about the options at school

(9.5%) and (5.8%) respectively. Such a finding shows that the interest that has been expressed in the elements of War and history throughout the findings is likely to be related to the fact that the respondents are exposed to these elements from an early age as it forms part of the history of Japan.

Overall, guide-books were shown to be the travel source most utilised by the respondents. This finding show that the majority of the Japanese respondents rely on this form of

travel literature and therefore such a medium is a useful tool to use for promotional and educative purposes. The other main findings show, as can be expected, that the school education of the respondents rates extremely low as a travel source for the historical elements of the islands. However, between 10.4% and 11.5% of respondents knew about the (Japanese) colonial history and the World War II history of the islands from their school education. These were mainly the older participants.

Table 3. Sources of Knowledge

	Guide book	Tourist agency	Television	News-paper	School	Friends/family	After arrival	Internet	Other	N
<i>Cultural Elements</i>										
Chamorro culture	52.3	1.9	4.7	1.0	1.0	3.3	24.3	3.0	8.5	502
Chamorro history	51.0	1.2	4.8	0.8	1.2	2.3	25.2	2.7	10.7	435
Carolinian history	46.5	0.4	4.9	1.6	0.4	2.4	26.9	4.1	12.7	222
Carolinian culture	37.8	2.0	3.9	1.6	0.8	2.8	28.7	2.4	20.1	233
Island culture/lifestyle	44.8	1.0	4.8	0.2	3.5	3.5	31.5	2.4	8.3	521
Traditional local food	39.8	2.0	4.8	0.3	1.0	3.8	36.5	2.8	9.0	535
House of Taga	45.5	2.4	4.8	0.3	1.5	3.3	23.4	1.5	17.4	305
<i>History Elements</i>										
History of the islands	49.2	2.7	3.8	1.3	4.8	3.2	22.2	3.0	9.7	531
Colonial history	46.6	1.3	4.8	3.0	10.4	2.0	20.1	1.4	10.4	496
Religious buildings	47.5	0.5	5.2	1.1	1.4	1.6	30.8	3.3	8.5	330
Spanish artefacts	47.5	0.3	7.0	1.7	2.0	1.5	26.8	2.3	10.8	311
Buildings of Spanish Period	43.9	0.6	5.2	0.3	3.5	3.2	29.1	2.3	11.9	316
<i>Japanese Elements</i>										
Sugar King Park	54.1	2.4	3.9	0.8	0.8	1.6	22.0	2.0	12.2	445
Museum	48.7	2.7	4.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	24.3	1.9	13.4	375
Japanese Hospital	49.6	2.0	3.5	1.3	1.0	2.8	25.3	1.5	12.9	359
Japanese Jail	49.8	1.9	4.1	1.5	1.5	4.4	20.4	1.9	14.6	376
<i>World War II</i>										
World War Two relics	42.7	1.2	6.5	2.3	11.5	3.6	20.2	2.2	9.7	705
Suicide Cliff	51.0	2.5	5.2	1.4	4.0	4.7	19.1	2.6	9.5	663
Last Japan. Command Post	52.8	2.8	4.6	1.1	3.5	2.5	21.5	2.0	9.2	573
<i>Natural Environment</i>										
Endangered bird species	40.6	1.8	7.9	4.0	2.9	2.2	23.4	2.5	14.7	252
Micro Beach	50.4	3.5	2.8	1.1	0.9	4.1	23.1	2.8	11.3	508
The natural environment	40.9	2.9	7.9	2.0	1.7	2.2	28.8	4.6	9.0	571



Figure 5. The Internet did not rank highly as a source of information (The homepage screen of the Marianas Visitor Authority Site in December 2001).

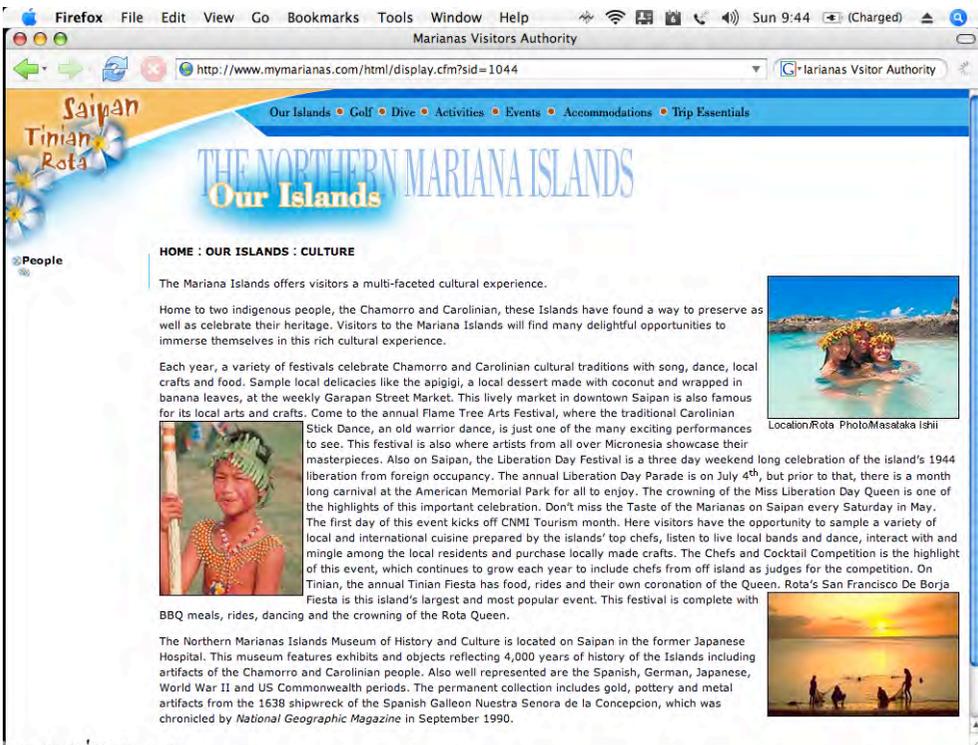


Figure 6. Cultural Information provided by the Marianas Visitor Authority Site in late 2006).

Striking are the differences between the responses to the survey reported here (Table 3) and the findings of the general visitor arrival survey administered by the MVA (Table 1). In the MVA survey, between 30% and 32% of respondents mentioned cited travel agents as the sources of information, while textual sources such as newspapers and magazines ranked low. The data are not directly comparable, as the MVA survey asked for the motivation of travelling to the CNMI and the survey reported here looked at the sources of information to specific locations. What it highlights, however, is that printed sources play a minor role in convincing visitors to come to the CNMI, but play a major role in the transmission of information *after* the visitors had arrived.

Timing of Information Acquisition

In total 693 respondents provided information on *when* they learnt about various aspects and attractions of the CNMI. As already noted when considering the source of their knowledge, a high percentage of visitors indicated that they were unaware of these aspects/ attractions. These responses range from 10.8% for World War II relics to 63.3% for local foods (Sayers & Spennemann 2006c). For the data provided in Table 4 all responses indicating 'I do not know about it' have been omitted and the percentages recalculated.

In the majority of cases, visitors were more likely to learn about the aspects and attractions of the CNMI *after* arrival. This was especially pronounced in the cultural and historical themes, with more than half of the respondents learning about island culture and traditional foods after arrival. In these themes the least amount of knowledge acquired prior to arrival related to Carolinian culture and history. Followed by information on the Spanish colonial period.

In the natural environment theme visitors were more likely to know about Micro Beach before arrival, presumably because sun and surf were one of the main reasons of coming to the CNMI. Again a large proportion of visitors learned about the natural environment, as well as about endangered bird species *after* arrival.

The only theme where visitors overwhelmingly knew about *prior* to arrival was World War II. Over half of the respondents knew about Suicide Cliff and World War II relics before they came, with knowledge about the last command post being about evenly distributed between prior and after arrival.

Table 4. *When did respondents learn about each element in percent (n=693)*

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival	I cannot remember	N
<i>Cultural Elements</i>					
Chamorro culture	38.4	14.1	40.8	6.7	510
Chamorro history	21.2	17.1	45.4	16.3	372
Carolinian culture	7.4	8.7	40.3	43.5	228
Carolinian history	11.8	7.9	35.3	45.0	251
Traditional local food	23.5	17.1	51.5	7.9	481
Island culture/lifestyle	21.2	17.9	51.6	9.4	474
House of Taga	24.1	7.9	37.2	30.8	292
<i>History elements</i>					
History of the islands	29.9	14.8	46.2	9.0	500
Colonial history	39.9	12.7	36.1	11.3	469
Religious buildings	16.7	11.7	47.6	23.9	345
Spanish Buildings	12.4	10.2	46.4	31.0	331
Spanish artefacts	20.4	11.7	38.0	30.0	326
<i>Japanese Elements</i>					
Sugar King Park	37.5	12.1	35.1	15.3	394
Museum	24.7	12.1	39.5	23.8	337
Japanese Hospital	25.6	9.6	41.3	23.5	333
Japanese Jail	31.0	12.9	32.4	23.7	339
<i>World War Two Elements</i>					
World War Two relics	50.5	13.4	33.8	2.3	615
Suicide Cliff	53.3	9.7	32.4	4.7	577
Last Jap. Command Post	40.5	11.3	40.2	8.0	495
<i>Natural Environment</i>					
The natural environment	32.7	17.6	42.8	6.9	516
Micro Beach	42.6	13.2	33.7	10.6	447
Endangered bird species	9.4	9.7	38.5	42.4	269

Slightly more difficult to interpret are the responses 'I don't remember.' They are particularly high for the two options relating to Caro-

linian culture and history (43.5% and 45%) as well as in the case of the endangered bird species (42.4%). These high figures correlate with the high responses of 'I don't know' for the same elements (Sayers & Spennemann 2006c). The same trend holds true for all other percentages of 'I don't remember.' It is possible that this response is a cultural artefact caused by the wording of the question whereby the respondents did not wish to be seen to be (or admit to be) ignorant—even though the questionnaire was totally anonymous.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON ISLAND

Given that such a high percentage of visitors learned about most aspects of CNMI culture and environment *after* arrival, it is appropriate to examine the nature of information sources available on island and the information content provided. In principle, there are four avenues that can be considered:

- i) television, which provided cable to all hotel rooms, contains a visitor information and advertorial channel, that covers a range of opportunities. While no systematic assessment of the content has been made, anecdotal unsystematic observation by both authors (ES in 2001 and DS 2001-2006) indicates that cultural and historical information ranks very low.
- ii) commercially published guidebooks sold in shops in the hotel lobby. With the exception of the Micronesia Handbook (Stanley 1989) they have not been examined in detail, but in general provide a good overview on the history and culture on the islands. In addition, there is a general map of Saipan available, that includes a number of small text insets that outline some of the culture and history of the island (Figure 1). Similar maps can be acquired for Tinian (Figure 2) and Rota (Figure 3). For most visitors, these maps function as a pseudo-guidebook.
- iii) brochures printed by the Marianas Visitor Authority (see Figure 1 as an example). These are distributed, on request, from the offices of the MVA, and can also be obtained from overseas (again on request). Personal observation has shown that, on the whole, these brochures are not widely

available in hotel lobbies. It is, at this point, not clear whether they are included in the information handed to members of organised tour groups, which are so popular with the Japanese market segment.

- iv) Magazines that are distributed for free to tourists and residents alike. The Magazines contain a range of advertisements and small cover stories as major advertorials for businesses and services. The content of these magazines shall be examined in more detail below.

All four avenues of information fill different niches in the tourist market. If we consider the potential influence they may have on the visitor, then it can be surmised that the guidebooks/maps will have the highest credibility, but that the TV channel and the tourist magazines will have the highest impact, especially as they are free and employ the concept of a repetitive recognition of a familiar product. The MVA brochures can be surmised to have the least impact. While they provide official information, that information is not perceived to be impartial (as would be the information in a guidebook for example; Gartner 1993), and more-over then leaflets are not readily accessible to the interested party.

ADVERTISING LITERATURE

The advertising literature that is available to the Japanese Visitor market is quite extensive and comprises specific magazines that are available for Saipan as well as in-flight magazines. To understand what information would be conveyed to tourists after arrival, the content of such publications was compared with the information sources used by the Japanese tourists (Table 3).

The imagery in these magazines was examined and each image was categorised according to themes such as shopping, cultural heritage and nature. The number of images pertaining to each theme for each advertisement was tallied to produce a 'Picture Content Analysis' (PCA). The PCA was developed for two reasons:

- To investigate which images the readers are exposed to the most.

- To compare respondent participation in each element to the PCA results to see whether or not the respondents participated in the same sorts of activities that are advertised.

Two data sets are available for this analysis. The data set of the original 2001 study and a replicate set collected in September 2003.

The 2001 data set

Analysed were two editions of the *Mariana Beach Press*' magazine (June and August 2001), a magazine produced by the MVA. The in-flight information that is available from the airline Continental Micronesia *Pacifica*' (1998)² and *Pacific Continental*' (2001) was also analysed, along with the August edition of the island magazine *Hafadai*'. All publication examined were Japanese language editions. The pages of the Japanese language magazines are typically very complex, with a crowded advertising layout and multiple images per (small) advertisement (Figure 8). By comparison, the text pages are comparatively image poor, although they, too, make use of small images only, which can be 'drowned' by loud advertisements (e.g. Figure 9).

Table 5. Total image numbers (PCA) 2001 data

	N	%
Food	581	25.1
Shopping (Specific)	347	15.0
Island activities	225	9.7
Massage/beauty	168	7.2
Gifts	149	6.4
Clothes/makeup	146	6.3
Water sports	115	5.0
Nature	100	4.3
Entertainment	88	3.8
Accommodation	87	3.8
Culture/history	68	2.9
Miscellaneous	58	2.5
Island Information	44	1.9
Car hire & Transport	42	1.8
Arts/Museum	36	1.6
Golf	35	1.5
Wedding	18	0.8
Relaxation	11	0.5

The image content analysis (Table 5) clearly shows that the visitors are exposed to food

(25.1%) and shopping (13.8%) imagery far more than any of the cultural and historical elements of the islands (4.5%). The 'clothing/makeup' and 'gifts' categories were all featured in the advertisements for shopping. When these elements are combined, the proportion of imagery for shopping (27.7%) is actually higher than any other category.

'Island activities' is the next highest category (9.7%), with 'nature/scenery' at (4.3%). This proportion of imagery is quite low compared to the level of interest in the natural environment that was expressed by the questionnaire respondents as a travel motivation (44.8%) (Sayers & Spennemann 2006c).

Table 6. Total PCA Total Image Number Culture vs Shopping 2001 data

	Culture	Shopping
	n	n
<i>Pacifica</i> (Japanese)	51	25
<i>Continental Pacific</i> (Japanese)	11	27
<i>Hafadai</i>	6	207
<i>Marianas Beach Press</i> 06/01	0	30
<i>Marianas Beach Press</i> 08/01	0	30

The in-flight magazines interestingly show the highest proportion of images relating to the culture/history of the islands. When looking at the total image number for each magazine for the specific categories, *Pacifica*' has the highest number of images for this category (51), whilst *Continental Pacific*' has the next highest (11). The reverse is true for the *Hafadai*' and the two *Marianas Beach Press*' magazines, which show a very low level of cultural/history imagery. For the category 'shopping,' an overwhelming (207) images appear in the *Hafadai*' magazine, whilst (30) images appear for each of the *Marianas Beach Press*' magazines (Table 6).

The one museum reference that appeared in each of the *Marianas Beach Press*' magazines specifically pertained to an exhibition of the Japanese Era of the islands. Given that the magazines are written in Japanese and are targeted at Japanese visitors, this advertisement, whilst out of the ordinary compared to the other imagery, does have a place in the magazines, as it specifically relates to Japanese people and Japanese history.

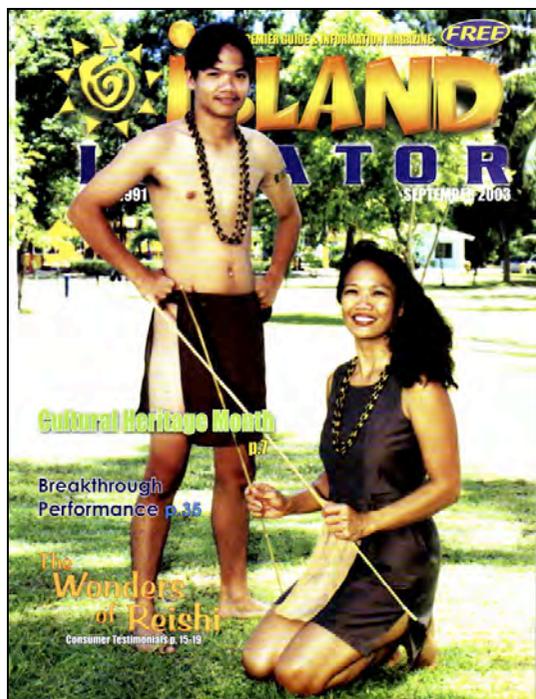
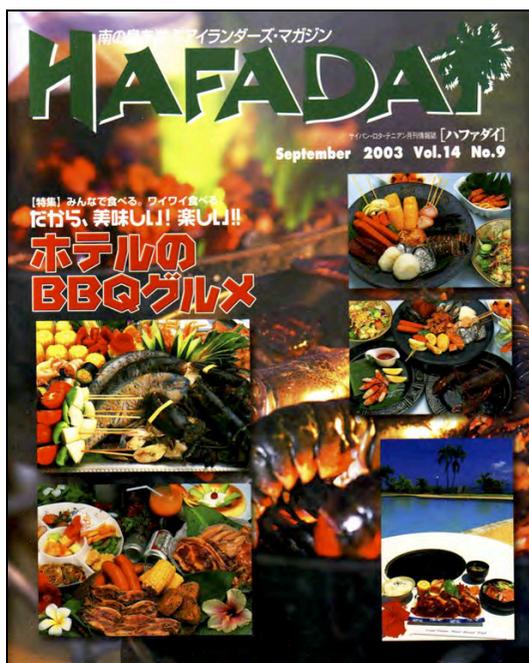


Figure 7. Title pages of tourist magazines distributed on Saipan in September 2003



Figure 8. Example of a typical multi-advert/multi-image page of the Hafa Adai magazine of September 2003



Figure 9. Example of a text page (on Micronesian history) of the Hafa Adai magazine of September 2003

These findings suggest that the in-flight magazines, whilst comprising a fair amount of imagery for the shopping and other categories, do not solely aim at advertising and promoting such categories. The in-flight magazines also usually contain articles and information about the people of the islands and therefore take an both an educative and advertising approach.

Table 7. Magazines Issues for September 2003

Magazine	Language	Pages	vol (no)
Beach Road	English	20	2(10)
Marianas Beach Press	Japanese	64	(297)
Hafadai	Japanese	72	14(9)
Island Locator	English	36	—

The 2003 data set

The Picture Content Analysis was repeated with a sample of four tourist magazines, two English- and two Japanese-language publications, all collected in September 2003 (Table 7). The cover images are revealing as to the magazines' intent (Figure 7).

Table 8. Total image numbers (PCA) 2003 data

	Japanese		English	
	N	%	N	%
Food	296	35.9	49	26.6
Shopping (Specific)	76	9.2	29	15.8
Island activities	11	1.3	0	0.0
Massage/beauty	98	11.9	1	0.5
Gifts	30	3.6	0	0.0
Clothes/makeup	75	9.1	2	1.1
Water sports	80	9.7	0	0.0
Nature	3	0.4	0	0.0
Accommodation	27	3.3	5	2.7
Entertainment	42	5.1	11	6.0
Culture/history	21	2.5	4	2.2
Miscellaneous	6	0.7	8	4.3
Island Information	37	4.5	72	39.1
Arts/Museum	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Golf	9	1.1	0	0.0
Car hire & Transport	13	1.6	3	1.6
	824		184	

The magazines aimed at the English-speaking market (*Beach Road* and *Island Locator*) show semi clad women and men, while the two

magazines aimed at the Japanese market show food (*Hafadai*) and a canoe with men and women in Carolinian dress (*Marianas Beach Press*).

The breakdown of the images in the two sets of magazines also shows a differentiation of the target audience (Table 8). The two magazines aimed at the Japanese market emphasised food (35.9%) over massage/beauty (11.9%), water sports (9.7%) and shopping (9.2%). The English-language publications, on the other hand, emphasised island information (39.1%) over food (26.96%), shopping (15.8%) and entertainment (6%).

The role of culture

Overall, the elements of culture and history of the CNMI ranked very low in the publications. In 2001 a total of 2.9% of images in the Japanese-language publications could be interpreted as depicting either culture or history themes. By 2003 that percentage had dropped to 2.5%. With only 2.2%, the representation of cultural items was even lower in the English-language magazines. As is shown in Table 9, variation also exists between the magazines, with *Marianas Beach Press* having the highest percentage of cultural and historical images.

Table 9. Representation of cultural and historical themes in the tourist magazines

a	<i>Beach Road</i>	<i>Island Locator</i>	<i>Hafadai</i>	<i>Marianas Beach Pr</i>
% cult./hist. items	0.0	3.3	1.3	4.8
Traditional Dress		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Handicraft		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foodplants		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Traditional Canoes				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
“Traditional” Dances			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The cultural imagery used in the 2003 publications is limited to traditional—as well as portrayed to be traditional—attire, food and activities (Table 9). The magazines are conceived as vehicles for advertising and thus do

not carry many cover stories. This holds particularly true for the Japanese language magazines. As a result, the exposure of readers to cultural and historical stimuli emanating from the magazine pages is limited.

In contrast, the promotional brochures that are available prior to visitation show many images of island life and the amenities that are available. These brochures, as well as the *Micronesia Handbook* (Stanley 1989) detail the history of the islands and help to educate potential visitors of the history and attractions that the islands have to offer.

EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES IN SHAPING KNOWLEDGE

Given that a high percentage of information is acquired after arrival, it is worth examining how effective the information delivery actually is. To answer this question, the timing of information acquisition was correlated with the self-nominated level of knowledge held by the respondents. Table 10 to Table 15 set out the correlations for the levels of knowledge at the point of departure with regard to Chamorro culture (Table 10), Carolinian culture (Table 11), World War II relics (Table 12), the House of Taga (Table 13), traditional local food (Table 14) and religious buildings (Table 15) with the time when the visitors were being made acquainted with the subject matter.

With the exception of the Carolinian culture (Table 11), respondents considered themselves more knowledgeable about a subject matter or site if they had obtained information on that cultural or historical aspect before their arrival in the CNMI.

A high percentage of respondents had acquired some level of knowledge after arrival, but were unsure whether they should consider themselves knowledgeable or acknowledge that they were not knowledgeable. That applies to all categories—and especially to the Carolinian culture—with one notable exception: the World War II period (Table 12).

The greatest improvements in knowledge after arrival occurred in the area of traditional foods (combined knowledgeable: 18.5%), followed by knowledge about the house of Taga (16.5%).

Table 10. Correlation between the level of knowledge of Chamorro culture at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic N=148)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	1.2	0.0	0.2
Mildly knowledgeable	9.6	2.0	1.4
Somewhat knowledgeable	15.7	4.8	8.2
Don't Know	8.7	4.8	21.1
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	2.1	0.2	2.9
Mildly Not knowledgeable	1.2	0.7	3.4
Very Not knowledgeable	1.4	1.2	5.5

Table 11. Correlation between the level of knowledge of Carolinian culture at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic (n=140)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mildly knowledgeable	3.5	1.2	1.2
Somewhat knowledgeable	5.9	4.1	9.5
Don't Know	1.2	3.0	41.4
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	0.6	1.2	4.7
Mildly Not knowledgeable	1.2	0.6	0.0
Very Not knowledgeable	0.0	2.4	4.1

Table 12. Correlation between the level of knowledge of World War II relics at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic (n=585)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	7.4	0.9	0.3
Mildly knowledgeable	23.1	4.1	4.3
Somewhat knowledgeable	15.6	5.8	11.1
Don't Know	3.0	1.4	10.5
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	1.0	0.7	1.8
Mildly Not knowledgeable	0.6	0.1	1.7
Very Not knowledgeable	1.1	0.7	3.1

Table 13. Correlation between the level of knowledge of the 'House of Taga' at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic (n=211)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	9.4	0.4	2.4
Mildly knowledgeable	7.5	2.4	2.7
Somewhat knowledgeable	8.2	2.7	11.4
Don't Know	3.1	2.7	21.2
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	0.4	0.8	2.0
Mildly Not knowledgeable	0.8	0.4	2.4
Very Not knowledgeable	0.8	0.8	4.7

Table 14. Correlation between the level of knowledge of traditional local food at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic (n=438)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	0.8	0.8	0.4
Mildly knowledgeable	8.7	2.3	4.7
Somewhat knowledgeable	10.8	7.0	13.4
Don't Know	2.1	4.4	23.7
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	1.5	0.9	4.5
Mildly Not knowledgeable	0.2	0.4	1.9
Very Not knowledgeable	0.4	0.8	5.1

Table 15. Correlation between the level of knowledge of religious buildings at departure with the timing when they acquired information on the topic (n=276)

	Before arrival	Before and after arrival	Only after arrival
Very knowledgeable	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mildly knowledgeable	5.4	1.2	3.6
Somewhat knowledgeable	9.3	3.6	12.0
Don't Know	3.6	5.4	27.9
Somewhat Not knowledgeable	1.2	0.0	3.6
Mildly Not knowledgeable	0.3	0.0	4.2
Very Not knowledgeable	0.6	1.8	5.7

The least new knowledge was gained for Chamorro (9.85) and Carolinian culture (10.7%), with 8.8% and 11.8% respectively still considering themselves not knowledgeable in these aspects even though they had acquired information about these cultural aspects after arrival on the island. Overall, these figures suggest much opportunity for improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the findings of the survey are sobering. A very high percentage of respondents was not sure whether information was readily available to them while on island, or felt that this was not the case (Figure 3). Printed matter dominated the information provision on the islands, the internet being only a very minor source (in 2001). A large percentage of visitors relied on guidebooks as the main source of information (Table 3) with the majority of respondents learning about the various cultural and historic attractions after arrival (Table 4)—with the World War II period forming the exception.

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Newspapers and tourist magazines, such as those analysed, have little information value and are also only little drawn on.

The overall very low acquisition of knowledge after arrival in the CNMI provides the Marianas Visitor Authority in collaboration with the CNMI Historic Preservation Office with much opportunity for improvement.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The amenities that are available to the passengers whilst they are waiting to board their flight, include a Duty Free shop and three eating areas, one of which is a VIP area. Data collection entailed the distribution of the questionnaires to people in the seating area of the departure lounge of Saipan International Airport. The researcher deliberately did not approach people who were sitting in the eating area so as not to disturb them whilst they were eating
- 2 The year shows how (surprisingly) old some of the in-flight material was at the time of the study.

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