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The eRTR Journey

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Introduction

In 2003, the e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR) was born. The journal has evolved from a product of a cooperative project sponsored through alliances between TTRA, the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University aimed at facilitating knowledge transfer from academia to industry to an electronic open access journal managed by the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University. The journal to date has published a total of 11 volumes with the support of eRTR's volunteers that serve on the editorial management and review boards and the authors who contribute research on emerging travel and tourism research issues. With the work of over 400 authors and 60 reviewers from around the world being represented in these previous volumes, this commentary reflects on the diversity of topics published by the eRTR and the regional distribution of eRTR's authors and reviewers.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was two-fold.

1. To identify the regional distribution of e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR) authors and reviewers that have contributed to Volume 1 – 11;
2. To identify the topics of research papers published by e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR) between Volume 1 – 11.

Research Methodology

eRTR Authors

Data for this report was gathered from 27 April – 20 May 2015. The data was collected via the e- Review of Tourism Research (eRTR) website (<http://ertr.tamu.edu>). The eRTR archive was accessed which contains a list of each volume and issue published by the eRTR.

The following core data was extracted from each published paper from Volume 1 through to Volume 11– *volume number, issue number, author name, author location and keywords* contained within each article. This data was populated into an excel spreadsheet. The authors' location data was organized using continents with the following categories: Africa, North America (US and Canada), Latin America (Central and South America), Asia, Australia (with Oceania) and Europe.

eRTR Reviewers

The geographic distribution of eRTR reviewers (*based on the location of the reviewer's university*) was collected via the internal reviewers spread sheet. The reviewers' location data was organized into the following categories: Africa, North America (US and Canada), Latin America (Central and South America), Asia, Australia (with Oceania) and Europe.

eRTR Topics

After extracting the keywords for each paper into an excel document, this data was transferred into one single word document. A data-cleaning phase was performed to ensure consistency and uniformity of spelling to improve the data. Inconsistencies in data were identified and corrected in order to only display one complete record. For example, Tourism and tourism and tourist, Tourist, Tourists were all updated to one singular word format to maintain consistency and accuracy of results. A word cloud, also known as tag cloud is a text data visualization method. In order to establish word frequencies, a word cloud has been created to visually present the text data. The completed word document was loaded into word cloud software 'Tag Crowd' <http://tagcrowd.com/> to generate a visual presentation of the data findings.

Findings

Regional Distribution of eRTR Authors

A total of 404 authors have contributed to the eRTR between Volume 1, 2003 and Volume 11, 2015. The results reveal that overall America 45.79%, Europe 28.71% and Australia (including Oceania) 12.13% were the most dominant continents in terms of contribution of papers from eRTR authors (Figure 1). In terms of developing countries, Asia took the lead accounting for 6.19% of eRTR authors, followed by Latin America 4.21% and Africa 2.97%. Developing countries as a whole provided a total contribution of 13.37% to the eRTR journal.

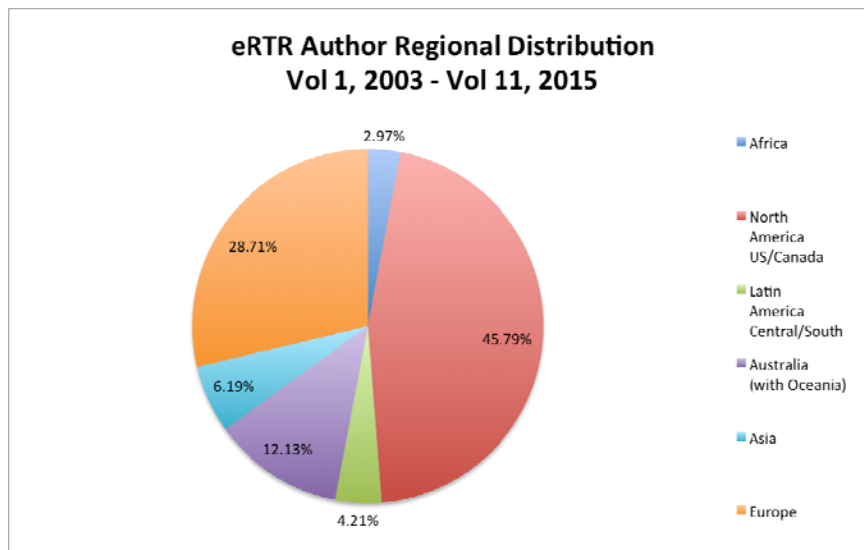


Figure 1. Regional Distribution of eRTR Authors

Volume 1, 2003 saw the majority of authors located in North America (64.81%) and Australia, including Oceania 22.22%, with only 11.11% of authors contributing to the eRTR from developing countries (Asia, Africa & Latin America) (Figure 2).

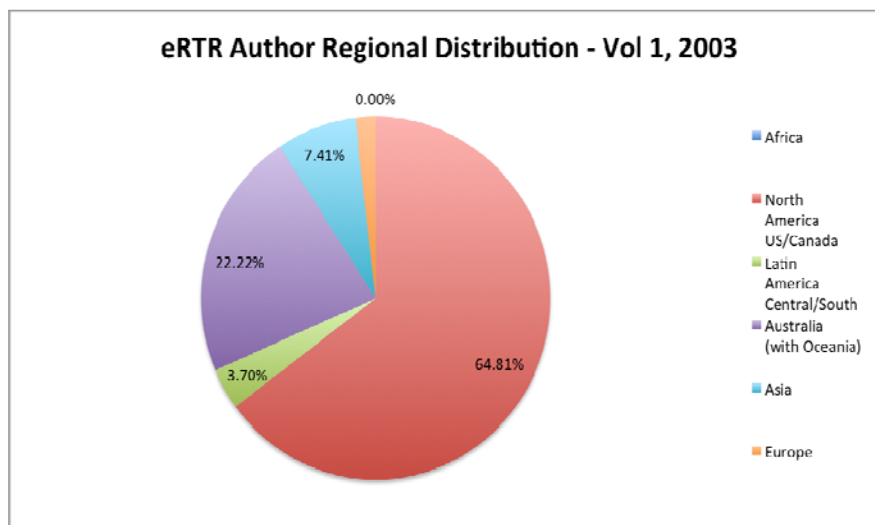


Figure 2. Regional Author Distribution for Volume 1

Reflecting on the eRTR's recent publication (Figure 3), Volume 11 reported a change in regional distribution. Whilst North America still dominated accounting for 30% of authors, as a collective 30% of authors were located in developing countries (Asia, Africa & Latin America). In comparison to Volume 1, 2003 the increase in author contributions from developing countries was 18.89%. It can be noted that in Volume 1, authors from Europe were non-existent however in Volume 11 authors from Europe accounted for 35%. Australia (including Oceania) saw a decrease (17.22%) in author contribution in comparison with Volume 1.

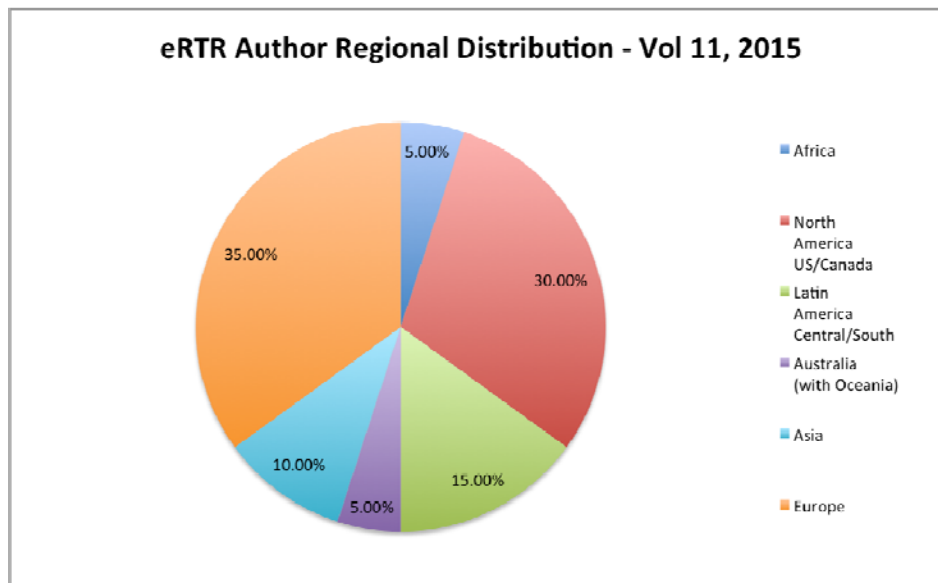


Figure 3. Regional Author Distribution for Volume 11

A possible explanation for this trend is the emergence of research excellence measurement exercises in certain countries that make it difficult for authors to contribute to publications that are not recognized by their institutions. Another trend to consider is the greater number of tourism research institutions emerging in Asia and Latin America. Yet another fact to consider is the emergence of a new tourism scholar generation that feels more comfortable publishing their work in English.

Regional Distribution of eRTR Reviewers

A total of 63 eRTR reviewers were identified as serving as reviewers for the eRTR journal between Volume 1 and Volume 11. Europe is identified as the largest base of reviewers (31.75%), followed by North America (25.40%), Australia (and Oceania) (22.22%), Asia (14.29%), Africa (4.76%) and Latin America (1.59%) (Figure 4).

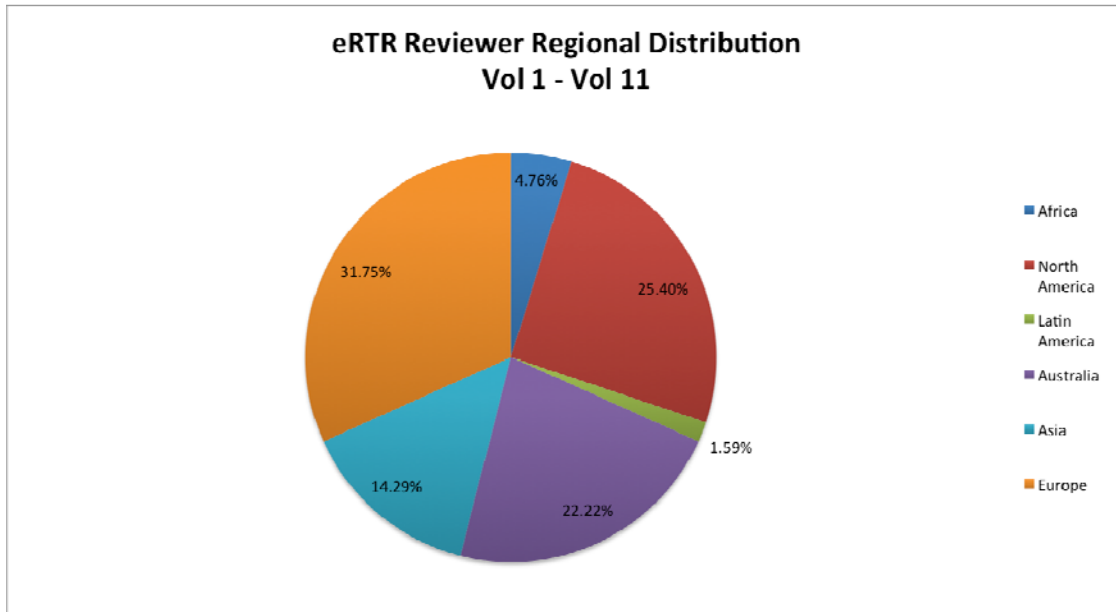


Figure 4. Regional Distribution of eRTR Reviewers

This is a clear call for more Latin American and African scholars to consider reviewing for eRTR.

Topics of papers published by eRTR (Vol 1 – Vol 11)

Derived from the topics of papers published between Volume 1 – 11, the data collected was collated into a word cloud to provide a visual representation of the findings (Figure 5). We have identified high frequencies for the following words: Tourism, Travel, Marketing, Development, Information, Impact, Destination, Community, Sustainable, Quality and Online. The most dominant word identified was ‘tourism’, which reflects the focus of the journal. It is evident that other frequency of words - marketing, online, development, information and sustainable all echo the objective of the eRTR in delivering emerging travel and tourism research issues with an applied focus.



It is important to note that the size of the words reflect frequency, not the importance or the exact context of the words.

Figure 5. eRTR Article Keywords

Conclusion

eRTR has provided an important publication outlet for researchers around the world. As an open access journal, diversity in authors, reviewers and topics is extremely important. The above results showed that this is achieved to some extent but that there is indeed room for improvement.