

CometoChengdu.com: The first stop on a trip

Chengdu's tourism authorities hope to attract more visitors to the city with the launch of an English-language website detailing all it has to offer, **Wang Xiaodong** reports.

CometoChengdu.com, the official English-language website for visitors to Chengdu, aims to make international tourists "travel like locals" by offering the latest and most detailed tourism information on Chengdu.

Jointly launched this month by the Chengdu Tourism Bureau and Chengdu Culture and Tourism Group, the website is poised to become the primary window on Chengdu for tourists around the world.

The website will promote itself through international Internet media platforms for greater international awareness, according to the operators of the website.

It is expected to help expand the inbound tourism market for Chengdu as it provides international tourists, including individual tourists and business travelers, with comprehensive tourism information and details of the services on offer in Chengdu and its neighboring areas.

According to a survey of 1,000 overseas tourists, most travelers from overseas get information on Chengdu's tourism from third-party tourism websites, which usually fail to meet the demands of international travelers.

What is worse, such websites can dampen interest in going to Chengdu. As Robert Fred Webb of the American company Signature Travel and Tours said at the first tourism expo held in Sichuan province, "Americans prefer to search for information of their tourism destinations themselves. If you have a good English-language website they will tell their friends about it even if you don't promote it. But we have never seen any information about many places in Sichuan on the Internet."

Dai Bin, president of China Tourism Academy, said out-of-date publicity has been a contributor to the decline of the number of inbound tourists to China in recent years.

Talking directly with visitors

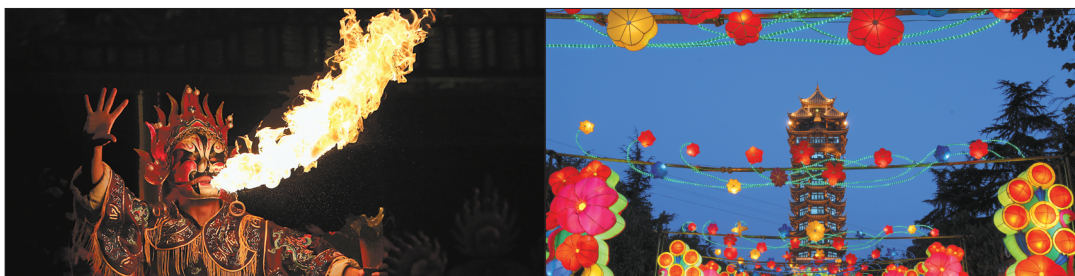
CometoChengdu.com was created with an international vision, and its designers have sought to cater to the browsing habits and information requirements of overseas tourists.

Another highlight of the website is it is connected with the Tripadvisor database, the world's biggest website for tourism com-



The English-language website CometoChengdu.com was launched this month.

KUANG LINHUA / CHINA DAILY



The portal provides comprehensive information about tourism resources in Chengdu.

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ments, so users of the website have access to the comments posted on Tripadvisor, so they can make judgments of their own.

A mobile app of the website is also available for Apple and Android devices, which can facilitate services for international travelers

after their arrival in Chengdu.

CometoChengdu.com provides information services for its target audiences before and during their trip, and encourages them to share their experiences after the trip on the Internet.

The website can locate its potential customers on media platforms such as Tripadvisor, Facebook and Youtube, and send them CometoChengdu.com content to arouse their interest in a trip to Chengdu. Tourists can then draw up a detailed touring plan

using information available on the website before they begin their trip.

During their trip they can check for updated information on the app on their mobile devices. They can also log on to Facebook and YouTube after the trip to share their experiences with others and interact with the official account of Chengdu Tourism to add more fans to Chengdu's social media.

Ease of use

CometoChengdu.com has a neat look and consists of four major sections - Discover Chengdu, Event Calendar, Things to Do and Traveler Information - that enable users to find the information they are looking for easily.

The website highlights information about the 72 hour visa-free transit service for passengers for Chengdu from more than 50 countries, a policy adopted to facilitate international travelers, and gives suggestions on touring routes in and near Chengdu suitable for a three-day visit.

The website also provides a "useful information" section, which has helpful information about communication and currency exchange, among other things, and tips about cultural differences.

The website also provides easy-to-find information on transport options, including the airport shuttle, buses, the subway, taxis and high-speed trains, to help visitors get to and from Chengdu and easily get about during their trip.

To better offer tailor-made services to users, CometoChengdu.com plans to add a "Create Your Trip" section to its website. Staff of the website will help users accessing the service design plans for their trips and give advices.

The website will also cooperate with airlines that have direct flights to Chengdu and international chain hotels to offer cheaper flight and accommodation to international tourists.

The website will also provide latest information on Chengdu's tourism, shopping, entertainment and business to users who have registered online.

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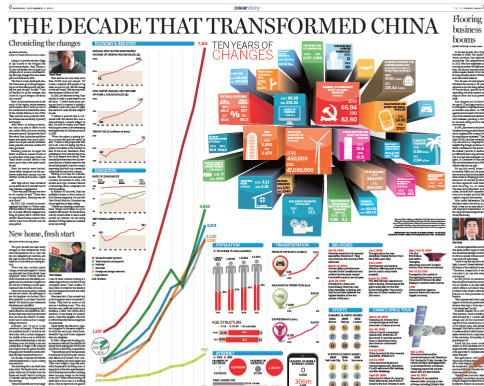
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