



Guideline for creating touristic content

Table of contents

Imprint	7
I. Digital content: the key to successful destination marketing	8
1. From classical destination marketing to valuable content	8
2. A challenge for destinations	8
3. Creating an information infrastructure	10
4. Towards a common database	10
5. Guests as part of the content strategy	11
6. Future-oriented data and systems	12
II. Step by step towards a long-term content marketing strategy	13
1. Self and competitor analysis	13
2. Defining the target group	13
3. Defining tangible goals	14
4. Distribution	15
5. Researching topics and keywords	15
6. Content audit and editorial schedule	16
7. Creating high-quality content	16
8. Monitoring content	17
III. Characteristics of a good text	19
1. SEO – the key to better texts	19
a. Functioning of search engines	19
b. Content for search engines	19
c. Duplicate content	21
d. Keywords	21
e. A summary of Google quality campaigns	22
2. Creating content for readers	22
a. Choosing the right text length	22
b. The target group defines the style	23
c. T-V distinction	23
d. Choosing the right linguistic style	24
3. Structure of a successful text	24
a. Headline	24
b. Teaser/summary	25
c. Description text	25
d. Abbreviations, numbers, addresses and phone numbers	26
Abbreviations	26
Numbers	26
Address blocks and phone numbers	27

Date and time	27
4. Multilingualism	27
a. Potential of multilingual content	28
b. Translating in practice	28
c. Metric or imperial?	28
IV. Multimedia and interactive content	29
1. Choosing the right motive	29
2. Qualitative requirements for images	29
3. SEO for images	30
a. Context, name and attributes	30
File name	31
Alt attribute	31
Title attribute	32
Width and height	32
b. Automatic object recognition, unique images and links	32
4. Dealing with image rights	33
a. Different rights of use and common licenses	34
All rights reserved	34
Rights managed	34
Royalty free (license free)	34
Creative Commons	34
Public domain	35
b. Right of publicity	35
c. Objects and buildings	36
d. Image citations and screenshots	36
5. Acquiring image material	36
6. Integrating videos	37
7. Panoramas and 360° media	37
8. Interactive maps	38
V. Outdooractive as a content platform	39
1. Where does content come from?	40
2. Linking different types of content	41
a. POI categories	41
b. Maintaining and assigning POI	42
3. Community of solidarity and open data	42
4. The Outdooractive Platform as media database	46
a. Using images	46
b. Copyrighted material	47
c. Uploading images and creating a gallery	47
The media browser	48
Media gallery POI	48
Media gallery route	49

Size, quality, format	49
d. Exif data	50
e. Videos and 3D elements on the Outdooractive Platform	50
POI video	51
Tour video	51
3D video	51
3D flight	51
VI. Content creation with Outdooractive Business – part 1: structure/functioning	53
1. General information	53
a. Current internet browser	53
b. Views in the Content Manager	53
c. Outdooractive Business App	54
2. User and user groups	54
a. User role	55
b. User status	55
c. Creating and inviting users	55
d. Archiving users	56
e. Content of a user group	56
VII. Content creation with Outdooractive Business – part 2: the creation of content	57
1. Routes	57
a. Route	57
Navigation on the map	58
Uploading existing GPS data	59
Creating a track with the tools of the Content Manager	60
Edit track types	60
[Overview of all track types in the Outdooractive Content Manager]	61
Tips & tricks regarding track inputs	62
b. Description	63
Title	63
Summary	63
Description	64
Author's advice	64
Safety information	64
Equipment	64
Tips, hints and links	70
Starting point/trailhead and Point of arrival	70
Turn-by-turn directions	70
Internal Note	71
c. Details	71
Length, Duration, Altitude	71
Difficulty	71
Stamina	71

Technique and scales	72
Experiential value	76
Landscape	77
Displayed region	77
Status	77
Exposition	78
Risk potential	78
Additional information for alpine activities	79
Recommended season	80
Characteristics and seals of quality	80
Literature and Maps	80
d. Stages	81
e. Linked POI	81
f. Creating routes in the Business App	82
2. Points	82
a. Title, Summary, Description	82
b. Opening hours	83
c. Location	83
3. Events and Offers	83
a. Events	84
b. Offers	86
4. Lists	86
5. Current conditions, notices and closures	87
a. Creating current conditions	87
b. Creating notices and closures	88
6. General information on content	88
a. Getting there	88
Public transport	88
Getting there	88
Parking	89
b. External relations	89
c. Export	89
d. Status	89
e. Comments and conditions	90
f. Statistics and the Content Reach Report	90
g. Rank	91
h. Translations	91
Translations in Outdooractive Business	92
Translations in the front end	92
Default language	92
Status of content translations	93
Influence of translations on the rank	93
Closing words	94

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I. Digital content: the key to successful destination marketing

1. From classical destination marketing to valuable content

Digitization significantly determines our era. This also includes touristic content. While ordinary advertisement with slogans and banners loses its value, sustainable content becomes increasingly more relevant for a successful brand communication.¹

Good content provides traffic on a website, ensures high search-engine rankings as well as a positive brand image. It furthermore supplies the readers with inspiration and useful information. A holistic strategy is of great importance to create relevant content and to ensure a successful and long-term online presence. Thus, to invest some time and resources is definitely worth the effort.

2. A challenge for destinations

Many destinations put a promising hiking trail network, beautiful cycling routes and rewarding wellness offers in the center of their marketing campaign. To cut a long story short: They advertise elements that they believe will attract and excite a large number of people.

But a successful strategy works the exact opposite way. Instead of addressing as many people as possible, it should be oriented directly towards the preferred target group.² If a region wants to attract mountain bikers, it doesn't make sense to simultaneously promote leisure bicycle routes.

Moreover, hiking and cycling trails are practically ubiquitous – just like hotels and wellness offers. Instead of promoting experiences that basically all other destinations offer to the very same degree, a region's unique selling point should be put in the center of attention – something that no other destination provides.³

Nevertheless, advertisement for special features doesn't exonerate from the obligation to digitize other content. In the end, only a few guests visit a destination due to something they were promised in an advertisement. They come because of recommendations and a worthwhile overall experience.

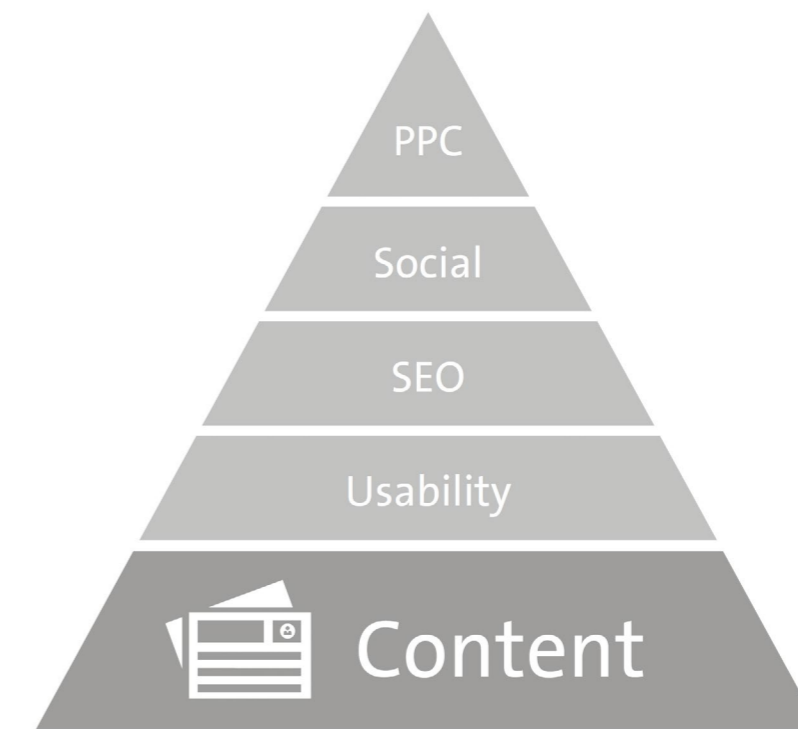
¹ Cf. <http://www.marketingjournal.org/the-power-of-content-marketing-jon-wuebben/> (Dec 2017).

² Cf. chapter II. 2. on target groups.

³ Cf. Christoph Engl: Destination Branding. Von der Geografie zur Bedeutung, UVK Verlagsgesellschaft Konstanz und München 2017, p. 61ff.

The traditional objective to entice as many people as possible to an individual website is no longer conventional either. Today, users decide for themselves where they want to get their information from.

Links to other sites are barely clicked and banner ads are usually perceived as extremely unattractive – presuming they aren't already prevented by an ad blocker. Furthermore, a modern design is practically useless if the presented content isn't interesting enough for the user. The only sound solution is to create "competent, believable, entertaining and informative"⁴ content as illustrated by the web-strategy pyramid according to Jason Schubring:



[Replication of the web-strategy pyramid according to Jason Schubring⁵]

Sounds like a lot of work? Well, it is. But it is necessary effort. The digitization of touristic content can not be stopped. Thus, it makes sense to actively participate in this process. Destinations that ignore digitization will soon experience disadvantages in form of lacking interest or bad reviews by guests.

When it comes to digitizing touristic content, destinations should consider a pioneering role in order to be able to actively intervene instead of being forced into the role of a spectator. By providing high-quality content they offer information and inspiration for potential guests. At the same time, they will find it easy to guide visitors on-site.

⁴ Miriam Löffler: Think Content. Content-Strategie, Content-Marketing, Texten fürs Web, Galileo Press Bonn 2014, p. 27.

⁵ Löffler: Think Content, p. 27.

3. Creating an information infrastructure

What sights do I want to visit? Which routes should I take? Where do I find possibilities for rest and refreshment? Where can I stay overnight?

Guests have to deal with a lot of questions prior to the actual journey. According to a Google survey from 2015, a single user visits more than 120 URLs on 26 different websites during 29 days while planning a trip. This is good news as it shows that guests are willing to invest a lot of time gathering information online.

But these numbers also show a very clear downside. The fact that guests have to visit so many websites in order to find answers, is a clear indication that it isn't yet possible to find all information in one place.

Traditional destination marketing with emotional images, meaningful brand messages and banner ads works well to create an image. But it doesn't take long to reveal a lacking information structure.

As soon as users want to make concrete plans for a trip, it becomes obvious that most content is rather shallow and either only gives partial answers or no answers at all. Consequently, guests leave the site and search elsewhere.

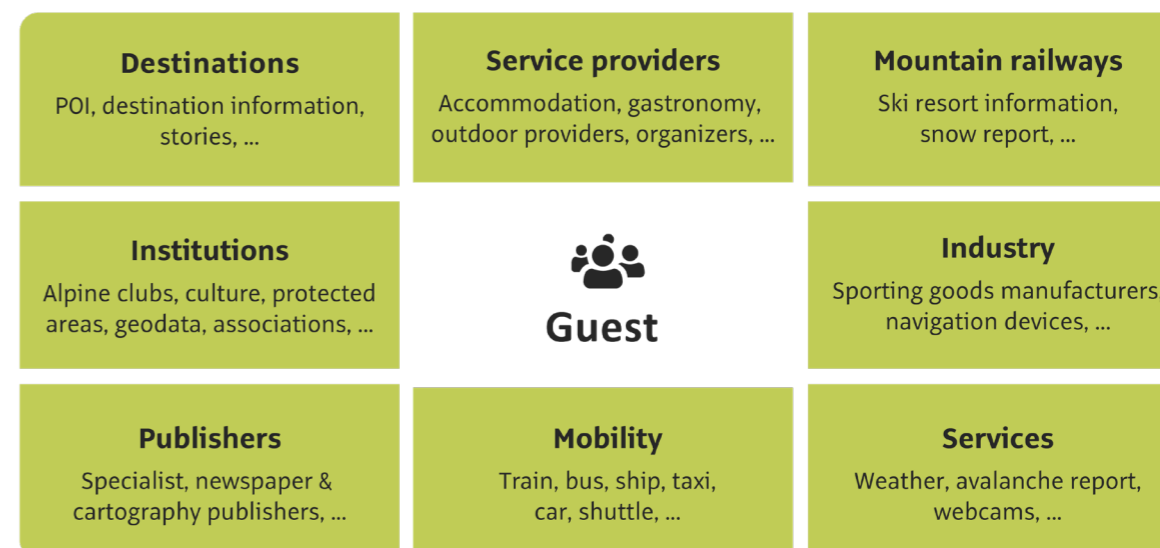
4. Towards a common database

This is where the concept of a common database comes in. It collects all content in one place – whether it's about places to visit, restaurants, recommended routes, events or bookable offers.

Thus, the content creates a detailed, thematically structured online travel guide. It provides many advantages – in contrast to conventional print travel guides. Information can be constantly kept up-to-date and spread out at different places. It can be combined again and again and is adjustable to different target groups.

To fill a digital platform with content and to keep it up-to-date is a task that cannot be done by just one person. Luckily, that isn't even necessary. If every player (who is involved in tourism) can cover his/her own part, a comprehensive network of structured information is created for the guest.

A useful strategy for effectively developing a content database would be to choose a new topic every year and to fill it with appropriate content.



[Content and participants of a comprehensive tourism database]

5. Guests as part of the content strategy

A major part of digital content is created by guests who have already visited a certain region. They share their experience with potential guests who might visit the same destination. User-generated content on international websites like *facebook.com*, *booking.com* or *tripadvisor.com* has a great influence on people's decision-making process – if it seems authentic.

That is why nowadays destinations avoid sending out a marketing message that isn't true to the reality on-site. Whether a destination matches the guest's expectations depends on whether the promises that had been made beforehand were fulfilled. Only satisfied guests submit a positive review that is consumed by other guests.⁶

In case of a shortage of reliable sources of information, user-generated content might get out of hand. There is always the potential risk of content that doesn't comply with the visitor guidance a destination works for.

For example, one user might praise a mountain bike route that leads through a nature reserve where cycling is not allowed. Only a sufficient amount of alternative mountain bike routes prevents the effect of those kinds of misleading or wrong routes. No guest is going to make an effort to collect data by himself if all information is already presented on one official page in perfect quality.

⁶ Cf. Engl: Destination Branding, p. 31ff.

6. Future-oriented data and systems

There are many different kinds of content in the touristic world. Every one of these types of content has an individual data structure and an ideal presentation format. Only if a clear structure can be managed and maintained, the content can be distributed quickly.

Software (as for example a CMS system) is significantly more short-paced than a set of data. A program used by many people today can be obsolete the very next day. Thus, datasets shouldn't depend on the system they were created with. They need to be flexible and integratable into other systems via APIs without any additional editing. Moreover, it is necessary that a system offers the export of a dataset into common formats.

It is also important that a system is capable of managing and transmitting content relations. Only this way, datasets can be permanently connected with one another, e.g. routes and places to visit or reviews and accommodations.

Last but not least: Content needs to be free from the rights of a third party. Otherwise, a widespread distribution would fail due to content that isn't allowed to be shared.

II. Step by step towards a long-term content marketing strategy

Digitizing the complete touristic offer takes time, resources and a reasonable strategy. It is elementary to define a strategy at first since it gives a clear overview of relevant topics, aspired goals and fitting distribution channels. Moreover, it creates a time frame in the form of a structured editorial plan.

1. Self and competitor analysis

A solid self and competitor analysis is important to figure out what content and topics determine your own industry. At the very beginning, you should always focus on your own business/destination or your own products and philosophy. The next step is the analysis of the competitors.

Questions that should be asked at this stage:

- *What does our business/destination stand for?*
- *What are we experienced in?*
- *What are our strengths?*
- *In what fields are we considered experts?*
- *How do customers/users/guests benefit from our offer?*
- *What are the concepts of our competitors?*
- *What are they doing better?*
- *In which areas do they lack experience/competence?*

Sometimes (and depending on the situation) it can be very helpful to adapt topics of competing companies that rank very well in search engines. However, if said topics don't fit into one's area of expertise, it is better to focus on something completely different – maybe even on something that had been missing thus far.

2. Defining the target group

Once the own competence areas are defined it is important to take a closer look at the customers, users and guests. The target group analysis is an elementary component of every content strategy.⁷

⁷ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 456.

Writing for a specific target group doesn't only influence the topic of an article, but also its style.

Companies and destinations usually tend to define their target group on the large. According to the motto *the bigger the better* they hope to address as many readers as possible. However, this strategy generally fails as a broad positioning usually falls short of focusing on the needs of the individual. In short: The content isn't relevant for anybody.

What can you do better then?

You shouldn't hesitate to exclude a specific group of people. It is much easier to produce relevant content if you know whose attention you want to attract. Just remember the mountain bikers and cyclists from chapter 1.2.

A target group is put together by a group of people that share different characteristics such as age, sex, residence, income or level of education. But even more important than those characteristics are the so-called psychographic features like interests, preferences, needs and challenges.

How do you find your way among so many criteria?

Once you have defined the target group, you can go into detail by creating personas. They represent real people giving the rather abstract target group a face. Thus, a 40-year-old Swiss with a large income becomes Markus E. who is a keen and passionate mountain biker and enjoys challenging trails, but also wants to spend a lot of his free time with his family.

It will be obvious very quickly that there are no boundaries when it comes to creating personas. Criteria could either be found, for example, with user surveys and data overviews on *Google Analytics* or by asking colleagues from customer service/user support, sales, social-media correspondence or the tourist information.

3. Defining tangible goals

Good content creates added value – for creators and readers equally. The readers get useful information that is easy to consume. At best, they even comment and share it. That, in turn, provides the creator of the content with brand awareness, traffic, reach and leads. So far, all of this still sounds rather abstract. Thus, the general observation is inevitably followed by the consideration which tangible objectives your strategy should achieve.

Do you want to inform your users about the construction of a new mountain railway that will make a huge ski resort accessible? Do you want to provide bookable offers? Do you

want to recommend a new wellness hotel? Or do you want to inspire your users to participate in an annual sporting event?

Once you defined your topic, please bear in mind that your own personal opinion and view is far less important than the users' interests. The needs of your target group determine the details you write about and in the end the relevance of your content.

4. Distribution

The best content isn't worth anything if it doesn't reach the intended target group. It is thus extremely important to think about the main distribution channel very early as it determines the structure of the article.

Step two is to optimize the content for search engines (SEO). Most users don't immediately search on the website, but get there via search engines. Learn more about the topic of search engines in chapter III. 1. a.

The next questions are: *What other channels could distribute our content? What about social-media channels?* When it comes to content distribution, sub and superordinate destinations, hoteliers and other service providers can be very important partners – as well as institutions such as museums or lift operators. Content widgets are suitable for a simple integration on the website. They create a consistent information structure and reach a large audience within the individual target group.

5. Researching topics and keywords

Once the targets of the content marketing strategy are defined and the target group is determined, the research of relevant topics and content focus points begins.

Brainstorming: At the beginning, it makes sense to write down key points that could serve as potential topics or have a connection to them.

Using different keyword tools: There are a number of tools that facilitate the keyword research. On the basis of individual keywords you can look for synonyms or words that share some kind of relation. Here are a few exemplary tools: *Google AdWords Keyword Planner*, *keywordtool.io*, *ubersuggest.io*, *hypersuggest.com* and *thesaurus.com*.

A list of keywords becomes a list of topics: The list we created now serves as a collection of keywords for a specific article. The second step is to arrange all terms in order of importance and seasonal relevance. Notes that aren't relevant to the target group can be

omitted. The tool *Google Trends* is quite helpful there. It lists the search volume during the course of the year and informs about which content is clicked most.

6. Content audit and editorial schedule

The foundation of the content marketing strategy is set. In most instances the website already provides plenty of content. Nevertheless, the content needs to be checked for topicality and relevance.

Most content can remain, if it is improved and adjusted to the strategy. Moreover, while reviewing the content, you will get a good overview of which content is still missing and needs to be created first.

The bigger the company/destination and the larger the number of people involved in the creation of content, the more logical it is to consider an editorial schedule in order to clarify responsibilities from the very beginning.

7. Creating high-quality content

Once all topics are distributed, the actual content creation begins. Every specific topic entails a new content and synonym research as well as an image search⁸ and at last an editing and proofreading process. All these steps require plenty of time that needs to be scheduled in advance. Content that is created in passing is usually not very valuable.

Good content is timeless and relevant to a majority of the chosen target group. It is consumed regularly and results in a high degree of interaction. In content marketing people often speak about the so-called *Evergreen Content* or *Flagship Content*.

Those include, for example, articles that could be found in a dictionary or in an instruction. They contain many facts and describe circumstances that only change very slowly – if at all. This could entail information about landscapes, climate, infrastructure and tradition. Articles through which destinations define themselves can also be *Flagship Content* – as well as topics they particularly want to present to guests.

Of course, the web presence in the touristic sector cannot solely be built with *Evergreen Content*. Emotional and entertaining content is just as important. It is very memorable whereas most people don't remember facts and figures for long.

Current information is equally important to potential guests as they want to know what they can do during their vacation. It is thus necessary to find the right mixture and to

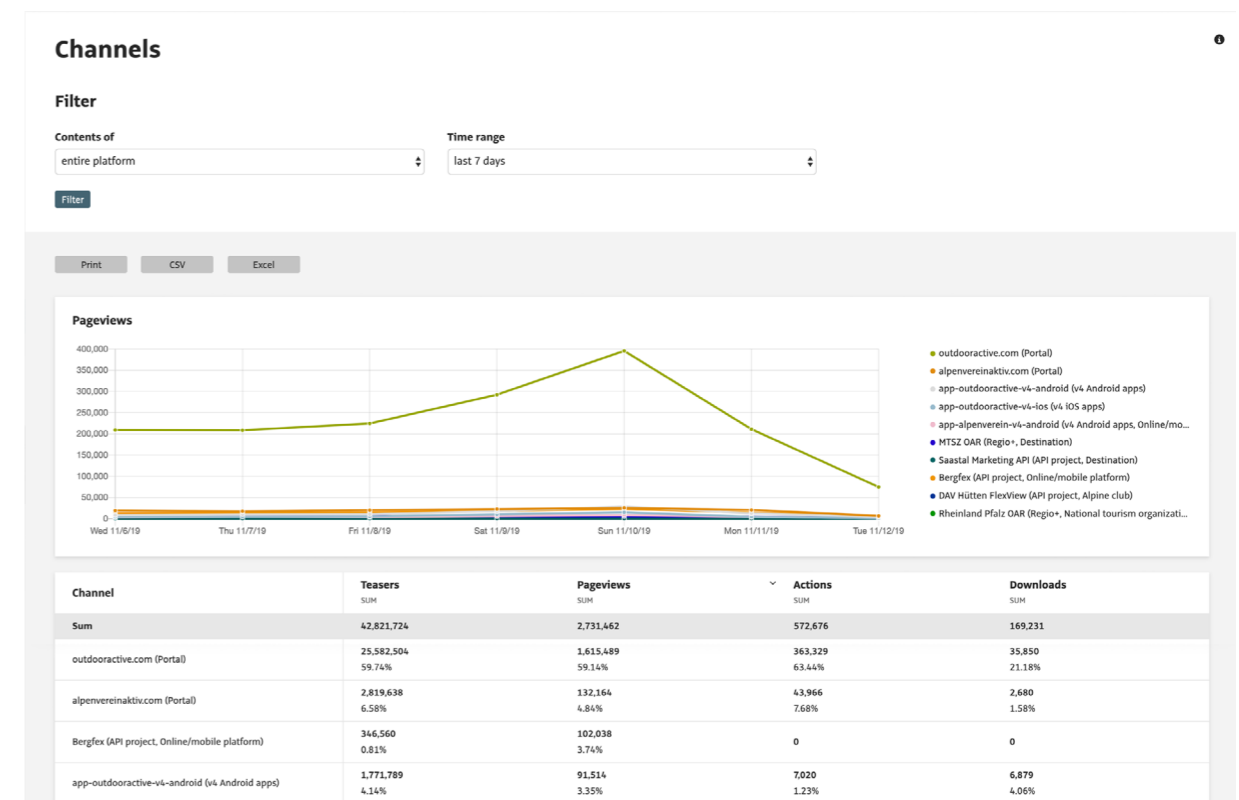
⁸ Cf. chapter IV. 5. on acquiring images.

know what content needs to be updated and edited. This is again regulated by the editorial schedule.

Specific criteria on high-quality content in chapters III. and IV.

8. Monitoring content

How do you know if an article is turning into *Evergreen Content* – or whether it shows no relevance whatsoever? The key is “monitoring”. All content should be monitored in regular intervals with the help of analyzing tools.⁹



[Example from the Outdooractive Content Reach Report]

If articles generate traffic over a longer period of time, they are most definitely part of the *Flagship Content* of a destination/company. This content should always be kept up-to-date as it builds the basis of web presence. This usually only entails smaller adjustments that will make sure that *Evergreen Content* remains current for many years.

⁹ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 163ff.

What do you do with content that doesn't initiate the desired traffic?

Especially content that strongly depends on seasons usually shows a few weaknesses when it comes to permanent traffic. However, seasonal topics do have one major advantage: They come back every year. So instead of having to write a new article on the very same topic every year, you should rather concentrate on updating old content.

This is particularly interesting in the touristic sector. Many topics hugely depend on the season – as for example the hiking network, ski resorts or traditional events. It is also interesting that most users inform themselves in an anti-cyclical manner. Meaning: They look for destinations for their winter vacation during summer/autumn and for summer destinations during winter/spring.

Destinations should use this behavior to their advantage and not just start with their winter marketing campaigns after the first snow already touched the ground. Of course, no guest wants to see a skier on the starting page of a destination in August. But nonetheless, it is quite useful to make seasonal content accessible all year round.

Another major advantage: By now, search engines such as Google recognize content which is regularly updated. They reward it with a higher rank on their index.

III. Characteristics of a good text

1. SEO – the key to better texts

a. Functioning of search engines

The most well-known search engines such as Google and Bing are so-called full-text search engines. A crawler or bot gathers content of selected sites of a domain in regular intervals and saves the results in a database.

How many times a website is *crawled* depends on the size of the domain as well as on the frequency of updates. The data collected by a crawler is organized and ends up on the index of a search engine provider – comparable to the subject index of a book.

Once a query has been issued, the search engine examines the index to find sites where the keywords occur. If a site is considered relevant, more information such as URL, title and summary are requested which are then presented to users as search results. The ranking of the hits is determined by complex algorithms.

While search engines keep the precise “recipe” of those algorithms secret, a few components can be identified:

- relevant keywords
- traffic (number of visitors on a website)
- number of page impressions per visit
- average stay on a website
- naturally generated backlinks that are relevant to the topic
- conversion rate (ratio of visitors to activity on a website)
- bounce and exit rate
- unique content

b. Content for search engines

With that in mind, it is easy to understand that every content needs to be edited in order to attract search engines. Good texts are particularly important as they are a search engine's most valuable and measurable source of information. The first illustration shows how users view a website; the second, how (most) search engines perceive it.

It is quite obvious: Everything that isn't part of the text, is just not relevant. Thus, if your texts aren't detailed enough, they won't be listed as search results.¹⁰

¹⁰ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 493.

e. A summary of Google quality campaigns

In the past few years, Google has created several updates for its ranking algorithms in order to reward good content with a high rank.

- **Panda-Update (February 2011):** Reader-friendly texts, unique content and multimedia content are rewarded with a higher rank. A website that doesn't provide users with added value or simply copies content (duplicate content) is classified with a lower rank.
- **Freshness-Update (November 2011):** Websites are rewarded if they are regularly updated.
- **Penguin-Update (April 2012):** Its purpose is to penalize websites with unnatural links. This includes irrelevant external links as well as misleading anchor texts.
- **Hummingbird-Update (August 2013):** Instead of just filtering keywords, Google Hummingbird is capable of considering context and meaning over individual keywords.

2. Creating content for readers

Despite SEO's best intentions, when writing web texts, you shouldn't forget that content is created for real people. An online editor is presented with the task of writing a high-quality text while keeping the different SEO criteria in mind. At this point, we don't know whether search engines are still significant in ten years. However, users will still exist in the same manner they do today.

a. Choosing the right text length

Key characteristics of a web text are brevity, conciseness and optical structure. Studies provide interesting facts concerning this matter:

- Reading on screen usually takes 25% longer than reading a printed text. Our attention span is significantly lower.
- 80% of all users read headlines, but only 20% read the following text. Moreover, most of them don't even accurately read the text, but simply skim it.
- 80% of all users don't scroll, which means that they only read *above the fold*.¹¹

¹¹ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 470f.

A good web text gets to the point quickly. The most important information is at the very top to convince the readers that the rest of the text is worth reading. Suspense does not belong in a web text. The structure of an article should follow the scheme of the *Inverted Pyramid*. Relevant facts come first, followed by additional explanations and some information that is *nice to have*¹² at the end.

This doesn't mean that long texts are generally inferior to shorter texts. The above-mentioned facts simply show that a web text has less time to convince readers. Once an addressee is interested and observant, a text can focus on more detailed information.

However, with regards to the concept of *mobile first*, comprehensive articles have more and more become a thing of the past. Texts simply seem much larger on mobile devices than on a desktop. It is better to distribute more detailed information into deeper levels and make them available by a sensible concept of links.

b. The target group defines the style

Every text is targeted at a specific group and has specific intentions. Target group and intentions significantly influence the style of a text. The style on the other hand correlates to the chosen text type. Whatever style you choose: Once you have picked it, you should commit to it. Alternating styles confuses your readers.

Inspiring or descriptive?

Personal or objective?

Humorous and vivid or formal and neutral?

So back to the beginning: Who do you want to write for? In tourism, the addressees are usually people that are planning a vacation, a journey or a trip. Texts that are too formal and objective don't fit that purpose.

What is the purpose of the text? First, it should inspire those users who didn't know much about the destination up until this point. Thus, the text should provide users with useful information that is important for the planning of a trip. The classic *call-to-action*, which invites someone to visit a region or encourages to book an offer, shouldn't be missing either.

c. T-V distinction

You can, of course, address your readers in a formal manner – however, this automatically establishes a certain distance. Regarding tourism and leisure, it is rather common to address a guest informally (*you*). Compared to that, the pronoun *one* seems impersonal and its use should be reduced to a minimum.

¹² Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 473f.

For route descriptions, it makes a lot of sense to use the same language that tour partners would use among each other. Thus, the following text would be ideal: *"We start our route in the center of the small village Berg. From there, a signposted hiking path (no. 18A) takes us uphill to the viewpoint (...)."*

d. Choosing the right linguistic style

To make sure that a text is easy to read and swiftly consumable, you should avoid the following elements:

- long and complex sentences (Flesch–Kincaid readability tests)
- passive voice and nominal constructions
- superlatives
- metaphors and abstract phrasings
- unnecessary fillers
- foreign words
- negations

3. Structure of a successful text

Before you start writing, you should roughly structure all information that you want to use in the text. This prevents you from rearranging or rephrasing individual text passages again and again.

A good text always consists of a headline, an introductory paragraph (teaser), an informative middle part (description) and a fitting conclusion (summary or, if appropriate, a call-to-action).

a. Headline

The headline also serves as the content's business card. A headline should inspire your readers and arouse interest to consume the text. Quite often, the headline is the only part of a text that readers really pay attention to.

The ideal headline consists of roughly six words or 60–80 characters (including spaces). To get the attention of search engines, it should include relevant keywords – the important ones are placed at the beginning. Moreover, it should be precise enough to explain what the text is about and show why the information is important.

Fillers and phrases do not belong in a headline. Numbers, questions, emotions – there is much you can do to create a captivating headline. Phrases that include the readers hap-

pen to work particularly well. Titles with odd numbers are clicked more frequently than those with even ones.

Stay away from empty promises: The text needs to keep what the headline anticipates!

Examples: *15 places to put on your bucket list; Plan your ultimate biking trip; Discover the most amazing photo spots in Europe*

b. Teaser/summary

No good headline exists by itself. A headline is usually followed by a short text that summarizes – in very few words – the following article and/or introduces it.

The teaser shouldn't be longer than 140–350 characters (including spaces) in order to guarantee full visibility on search engine result pages (SERPs). Ellipses (sentences without verbs) are acceptable. They don't require a full stop. A teaser/summary does not include paragraphs.

Note: A teaser isn't the same thing as an introduction. It addresses topics that will be explained in the following text. At the same time, it must leave questions unanswered to make sure that the following text is worth reading. Depending on the text type, it makes sense to adjust the summary: scenic, descriptive or even funny for stories, quick information for routes, POI and for the travel guide.

c. Description text

The middle part provides precise details and background information. It needs to complement headline and teaser. If the readers come to the conclusion that – after reading the first few lines – the content doesn't reflect what has been promised, they won't continue reading. Moreover, the readers have to believe that the writer knows what he/she is talking about. Questions should be answered before they are asked.

The text is structured in paragraphs; each paragraph concentrates on explaining one central thought in just a few sentences. There should be subheadings every few paragraphs that structure the text and intersperse additional keywords. Enumerations and lists turn a *wall of text* into a good article.¹³ Bold and italic formatting should be used sparsely or not at all!

Even descriptions follow the needs of the according type of text. Route descriptions should be mostly structured chronologically, whereas POI descriptions should state the most important information first. Stories should put the protagonist into the center of attention – a real person determines the course of the story.

¹³ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 474ff.

The description text should be followed by a conclusion and/or call-to-action. Reasonably placed multimedia content can be added to the middle part.

d. Abbreviations, numbers, addresses and phone numbers

To establish a layout that is consistent and intuitive, it should be decided in advance how and when to use abbreviations, numbers and address blocks. The following rules are based on the *University of Oxford Style Guide* and adapted for American English.

Abbreviations

Generally, you should write out as much as possible as it makes a text more fluent and easier to understand. However, common abbreviations such as *etc.*, *i.e.*, *e.g.*, *approx.* as well as frequently used units of measurement like *m* or *km* are acceptable. Abbreviations that are only known within a specific region or topic shouldn't be used – unless it is a reference or a technical text.

If a single word is abbreviated, it is followed by a full stop. If several words are abbreviated, every letter is followed by a period – with the exception of the Latin-derived *etc.*

Spoken abbreviations don't require punctuation. They are usually marked by capitalized letters (e.g. *EU*).

Abbreviations for units of measurement don't require punctuation. However, numbers and units should be separated by a blank space (4 km). To avoid unnecessary line breaks you should use a *non-breaking space*. It is applied by using the source code ` sp`. Common shortcuts are: Ctrl+Shift+Space and Alt+0160 (Windows) or Alt+Space (Mac).

When it comes to road numbers in the U.S. abbreviations of highways need a space (US 1), those of interstates need a hyphen (I-40). Abbreviations that were introduced by brands have influenced the displacement of the blank space (e.g. *Audi A3*).

If a sentence ends with an abbreviation, it doesn't require an additional full stop. However, you can combine a period with any other punctuation mark.

Numbers

Digits from one to ten should be written out; from 11 onwards, they should be written as numbers. Since it is easier for the human brain to process numbers instead of letters, it has been established in online marketing to use the numbers 1-10 in headlines.

In any case, you should use digits when the number is followed by an abbreviated unit of measurement (4 km). Number and unit shouldn't be separated by a line break. Please use a non-breaking space (see previous chapter on abbreviations).

In English, decimals are separated by a period. Commas after every third digit further organize the structure of the sequence of digits (beginning with the last digit). Prominent exceptions are postal codes and years – they don't require structures. Other sequences of numbers might follow individual regulations.

Address blocks and phone numbers

Outdooractive GmbH
Mr John Smith
Missener Straße 18
87509 Immenstadt

Tel: 08323 8006-0 or +49 8323 8006-0
Fax: 08323 8006-190 or +49 08323 8006-190

Email: info@outdooractive.com
Web: www.outdooractive.com

Date and time

ISO 8601 is an international standard that provides recommendations for the spelling of numerical date and time formats. According to this standard, date and time are ordered from the largest to the smallest unit. Thus, a date is usually arranged as YYYY-MM-DD (i.e. 2018-11-25). The time is indicated as hh:mm:ss (i.e. 10:30:00).

For less precise information, the last element can be omitted. The spelling 2018-11 denotes the entire month of November, while 10:30 denotes the time without second precision.

4. Multilingualism

The translation of a website is the first step to conquer new markets. A major part of international companies/destinations still hasn't come up with a unified strategy and a central administration for multilingual content.

a. Potential of multilingual content

Roughly 1.5 billion people in the world master the English language. Followed by languages like Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, French, Russian, Portuguese and German, it is ranked first place.¹⁴

Translations into English give companies and destinations additional reach and open up a huge new target group – as long as the topic is suitable. It makes, for example, a lot more sense to provide people with the English website of a popular German travel destination instead of translating the instruction for a German tax return.¹⁵

b. Translating in practice

A good translation management is indispensable when it comes to internationalization. Before focusing on translating content into other languages, you have to consider that the entire system on which the website is based on needs to be translated as well (localization).

Once you start translating content, you will soon realize that it requires a lot more time and resources than you might have anticipated. Changing the language of a website is more than just the simple translation of texts. It also includes adaptations to different cultures.

It might prove right to use your own language skills for private websites or blogs. However, if you want to operate a successful business, translations should be handled by professionals. For the acquisition of an international client base, grammatical and stylistic mistakes are unforgivable.

c. Metric or imperial?

If you want to address an international readership with your content, you should give a thought on which decimal system of measurements you want to use. A majority of Central Europe uses the metric system. However, a lot of other countries (mostly Anglo-American countries) use the system of imperial units.

Imperial units measure route length and altitude in miles and feet instead of kilometers and meters. Temperature is indicated in degree Fahrenheit, whereas the metric system prefers degree Celsius. Apart from metric and imperial units, there is also a difference in writing dates as well as in punctuation such as different delimiters for thousands or quotation marks.

Chapter III. 3. d. provides further information on writing guidelines.

¹⁴ Cf. <https://sprachkreis-deutsch.ch/2012/05/14/die-meistgesprochenen-sprachen-der-welt/> (Dec 2017).

¹⁵ Cf. <https://www.selbstaendig-im-netz.de/2015/12/22/content/mehrsprachige-internetauftritte-vorteile-nachteile-umsetzungstipps/> (Dec 2017).

IV. Multimedia and interactive content

Today, almost every publication integrates multimedia content. Whether images, videos or clickable infographics – they are ideal elements to complement written content. They engage all senses and make it easier for users to remember content over a longer period of time. But a right balance is pivotal. Content might seem rather irrelevant if there is too much media without any textual basis.

1. Choosing the right motive

In general, images aren't independent marketing elements. They are always related to a text. The motive of the image correlates to the text. If text and image don't fit together (*text-image-divergence*), this can be very irritating to the person consuming the content.

Example: *If an article informs about a new app, it makes sense to incorporate screenshots that supplement the text – or a video that shows how to operate the app and what features are integrated.*

Commercial or press photograph: These two terms sound rather similar. However, they are two completely different formats. Commercial images are used for catalogs or banner impressions. They often show a company logo, a model holding the advertised product or pursuing a certain activity. Press photos, however, tend to be more honest, informative and authentic – and are therefore a better fit for destination advertising.

It is even more effective to publish *Content Images* instead of press or advertising photographs. In touristic marketing each and every waterfall, guest house, viewpoint and museum is worth showing. All data is collected in a digital media database. The best images can be used as key visuals.

2. Qualitative requirements for images

Images only serve as good advertisement if they have the right quality. Small, blurry or fuzzy images aren't very appealing. Today, images need to function for big, modern monitors with high-resolution displays (such as Apple's Retina Display) as well as for the print sector. Thus, the image resolution – meaning the number of pixels – should be as high as possible.

A standard value of roughly 3600 x 2800 pixels is a suitable reference – this corresponds to the performance of an 8 megapixel camera. Nowadays, the displays of tablets and smartphones have a very good resolution and require large image files. Depending on the requirement, most systems automatically reduce the file to the necessary size. In search-engine optimization the minimal side length is 1024 pixels. Smaller images do not stand a chance when it comes to a good ranking.

JPG is a suitable file format for images, ideally saved with a high quality setting (80-100%). This format works well for almost every image-processing program and provides a good correlation between quality and file size. The PNG format provides additional transparency and a better quality, but requires more storage space.

The SVG format is suitable for vector graphics (e.g. logos). Unlike data that relies on pixels, it is independent of resolutions and allows a free scaling. Nonetheless, logos (and other graphics that are based on vectors) can also be exported as JPG and PNG.

Print products require images in a CMYK color mode, online publications need an RGB color mode.

Generally, image files should be provided in portrait and landscape format. Print media (key visuals, title images) usually prefer vertical images. Web purposes (especially for mobile devices) favor horizontal images. They appear larger, more detailed and with an increased quality. They also result in a higher click rate.

The landscape format is also the better choice for the Outdooractive Platform. More information on how to upload images and how to create a gallery in the Outdooractive Content Manager in chapter V. 4. c.

3. SEO for images

Chapter III. 1. b. shows that right now, search engines only concentrate on written information. While automatic object recognition is in the process of being optimized, bots/crawlers generally still get their information from image captions and attributes. They are supposed to reflect visible content of an image in written form.

a. Context, name and attributes

Search engines evaluate in which textual surrounding images have been placed. This includes all text passages that can be found around the image, including the subheadings of the surrounding paragraphs.

In this regard, the caption is the most important text of an image. It provides descriptive keywords as well as details on author and source.

Furthermore, there are particular attributes that positively influence the ranking in the result page of an image search. They are maintained in the source text (HTML) of a website. To open the source text, right-click on a free space of a website and choose "show source text".

To make it as easy as possible to create a SEO relevant website, the Outdooractive System automatically assigns attributes and autonomously creates image containers. The sole purpose of the following text is to provide additional information.

File name

In case an image had already had a relevant file name before being uploaded (not DSC000465.jpg), this title – as well as the image caption and attributes – is noted by bots.

File names are written in lower case and use dissolved special characters. The individual words of a file name should be separated by a hyphen, never an underscore character. Otherwise the bot won't be able to recognize different words.

Alt attribute

The alt attribute was originally developed for people with impaired vision. Reading options such as screen readers and voice browsers are capable of reading out information aloud.

The alt attribute is an element of the source text. Nevertheless, it is openly displayed on the website whenever an image cannot be loaded. The alt attribute should only consist of a few words and explicitly explain what is displayed in the picture. The most important keyword should be placed at the beginning; keyword stuffing is inconvenient.

When uploading images to the Outdooractive Content Manager, the alt attribute doesn't need to be entered separately as it is set identical to the title.

Bad example: ``
>>> *Image title and alt attribute are not defined.*

Bad example: ``
>>> *Undefined image title, alt attribute contains too many keywords.*

Good example: ``
>>> *Defined image title structured by a hyphen, alt attribute reflects image content.*

Title attribute

The title attribute appears when the mouse cursor moves over an image. This tag is important whenever there is no image caption. The title attribute can be identical to the alt attribute, but it doesn't have to be. It can also provide additional information, e.g. a regional classification or the name of the photographer.

When uploading images to the Outdooractive Content Manager, the title attribute is automatically identical to the title and doesn't need to be entered separately.

Good example: ``

Width and height

The development of a website is significantly faster if the HTML code states what measurements are required for uploading an image. Thus, the browser doesn't have to wait for the download of the images before being able to display the structure of a website. The Outdooractive System autonomously creates these image containers in the source text.

Beware: If you create such a container in the source text, you should edit the size of the image with a professional editing program. If this isn't the case, the file is automatically scaled and the image might end up blurry.

Good example: ``

b. Automatic object recognition, unique images and links

The current developments for automatic object recognition have a significant influence on the SEO of image material. Various algorithms enable search engines such as Google to recognize whether an image contains people or landscape. Artificial intelligence is able to analyze even smallest details such as facial expressions and gestures.

Of course, search engines are also able to filter identical images. This is a big disadvantage when using royalty-free material. In the vast majority of cases, these images are not purchased exclusively. This means that several parties use the same file and it is no longer unique. Therefore, images are no longer indexed by search engines and the content around the image seems less interesting for the crawler.

It is worth it to determine whether an image is already used on other websites. A Google image search tells you, where and how often an image is used. Acquiring an image is only profitable if it is barely or not used at all in a similar context. In the long run, only your own material will provide you with a good rank.

If you happen to have your own images, on the other hand, they will experience a swift rise. The more an image is used, the better. Images are like links: If they are used on many web pages of the same URL, they receive a positive ranking. Multiple use within one system has a positive impact on the ranking of an image and isn't regarded as duplicate content.

4. Dealing with image rights

Works of art, literature and science are generally subject to copyright protection – whether it is a painting, a poem, an invention or images and videos. Authors enjoy a number of rights to protect their work. These rights are thematically sorted in copyright laws and rights of use.

In this chapter, we will deal with the legal situation in Germany – for the place of jurisdiction of the Outdooractive GmbH lies within Germany. Please note that the legal situation in other countries can be different.

The copyright law says that an author of a photograph (photographer) is allowed to decide whether he/she wants to be mentioned by name, if he/she renounces or even prohibits attribution.

Rights of use regulate who is allowed to publish images and where. Without further regulations, this right only belongs to the author – he/she alone can transfer rights of use to other people and/or organizations.

Rights of use can be limited to a specific period of time or a specific country. The author can also limit the use of his/her photo to the extent of a single project, for the use in online, print or social media. Moreover, rights of use determine whether an image is allowed to be modified or if it is to be kept in its original state.

All those things need to be considered when using image or video material. Media cannot be published without the explicit consent of the author or the copyright holder (e.g. commercial image databases like *fotolia.com* or *pixelio.de*). Otherwise, you may have to deal with warnings or high fines.

a. Different rights of use and common licenses

There are many types of rights of use. To avoid confusion, images carry licenses.

All rights reserved

All rights of use lie with the author. The image is not to be used by others.

Rights managed

RM licenses are often used by photo agencies. Customers choose the type of use (e.g. for front pages of magazines, advertising posters or for the integration into a website) as well as a period of time; these two factors determine the price.

Images that are distributed with an RM license are generally high-quality and/or rarely used (unique). Moreover, it is even possible to use material exclusively – for a corresponding price. Once the predefined period has elapsed, new fees arise.

Royalty free (license free)

Despite common assumption, *royalty free* isn't the same thing as *right free*. The author determines certain rights of use for royalty-free images. They are often based on a one-time payment and can be acquired on platforms such as *shutterstock.com*, *fotolia.com* or *istockphoto.com*.

When purchasing a royalty-free image, you simultaneously acquire generalized rights of use. Usually, images can be used for different projects and for an unlimited period of time. Concerning the print sector, it is possible that the edition is limited. The specifics are regulated by the respective terms of use.

Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that provides several standardized copyright licenses. These enable authors to publish their texts, images, videos and music.

CC licenses permit the usage of these pieces of work under certain conditions. In many cases even commercial use is allowed. Creative Commons images are provided by open photo databases such as *commons.wikimedia.org*, *pixabay.com* or *flickr.com*.

A decisive factor is the addition – such as CC-BY-SA or CC-NC. These additions define the rights included in the license. The combination of different supplementaries is possible.

- BY:** The author is to be credited by name.
- ND:** The image is not to be changed (no derivative works).
- SA:** The image may be distributed and changed but it needs to be published under the same license.
- NC:** The image may be distributed, but not for commercial purposes.

Public domain

More and more platforms distribute image materials under public domain (CC0). This often includes historical photographs whose term of protection has expired. Other images belong to community users that make their images available to others free of charge.

Images with a CC0 license can be used without crediting the author. They allow derivative works and can be used for all purposes – often at the expense of quality and uniqueness.

b. Right of publicity

Apart from copyright regulations, you also need to consider other regulations before using images. If an image depicts a person, the right of publicity should not be violated.

This right states that an image that depicts recognizable people is only allowed to be distributed if said people give their written consent. According to § 22 KunstUrhG¹⁶ (German law of regulating art and copyright questions), consent takes place if the depicted person has been remunerated for the service and hasn't explicitly revoked the publication of said image.

§ 23 KunstUrhG¹⁷ determines three exceptions that take effect as long as no legitimate interests of the depicted person are violated.

1. Historical persons (e.g. heads of state, politicians, representatives of economy, scientists, inventors, artists, actors, performers, entertainers and athletes).
2. People as a part of the landscape, places or objects (it needs to be obvious that the person just happens to be pictured by accident).
3. People that participate in public events or assemblies as well as people being part of large crowds.

¹⁶ Cf. <https://dejure.org/gesetze/KunstUrhG/22.html> (Dec 2017).

¹⁷ Cf. <https://dejure.org/gesetze/KunstUrhG/23.html> (Dec 2017).

c. Objects and buildings

In some cases, copyright laws refer to the depiction of objects. Photographs of paintings and sculptures protected by copyright are subject to the same copyright law as the respective original.

Generally, buildings can be photographed/illustrated without any particular right of use. Exceptions prove the rule: If you want to use a photograph of the Eiffel Tower at night, you need to ask the light designer Pierre Bideau for the rights of use.

d. Image citations and screenshots

The copyright law also regulates the use of image citations and screenshots. If an image of a copyright-protected work is published, it underlies the very same regulations as the original.

However, there is an exception for the use in scientific papers. If a screenshot or image citation serves as evidence/supporting document, it is allowed to be used – presuming that the image merely supports the message and the use of this specific image is inevitable. For example, film, book, magazine or website reviews often require visual evidence.

5. Acquiring image material

When it comes to writing a successful article, appropriate and fitting images are indispensable. Big media companies employ trained picture editors that take care of acquiring photographs and administering image databases.

The touristic sector usually commissions professional photographers that take pictures or videos for marketing purposes. Smaller destinations often lack the necessary financial resources to produce their own material on a large scale.

A solution could be using pictures taken by employees (maybe they are skilled photographers). You just need to make sure that the employment contract arranges the right to use said images.

However, this possibility needs to be treated with caution as the difference between professional and amateur images is generally quite obvious. And as soon as images need to be edited for print projects, hobby photographers reach their limits.

Today, it is rather easy to acquire image material via the Internet. But the number of images provided by the Internet which can be used unhesitatingly is increasingly low.¹⁸

¹⁸ Cf. chapter IV. 4. on the use of image rights.

6. Integrating videos

In comparison to the use of media in print products, the application of media on the web is much more diverse and flexible. A video can – and will in the future – completely replace/complement the static image.

But stay away from amateur recordings! The production of high-quality videos is a job for experts; it needs to be well-planned and professionally realized. Only then, a video will provide real added value compared to images. Moreover, you should use a professional channel. YouTube provides companies with the opportunity to create their own account and publish all image or product videos there.¹⁹

When using video material you usually have to deal with the same licensing questions as for the use of images²⁰. Moreover, you have to consider that even music titles that serve as background music underlie common licensing conditions.

If you shoot your own video, you need to inform yourself in advance whether certain buildings or places require specific filming permits. The right of publicity²¹ exists in the same way for video recordings as it does for images.

7. Panoramas and 360° media

Panoramic images are characterized by a particularly wide-angle view (up to 360°). Before the development of digital photography, panoramas required specific cameras and stitch softwares that merged several single images into one.

Meanwhile, most cameras are capable of creating panoramas automatically. And modern technologies keep advancing. While panoramas only stretch horizontally or vertically, 360° cameras (omnivisual cameras or VR photography) provide videos and images from all perspectives.

The right software makes it possible to play 360° media on desktops and mobile devices; the image is navigated by turning the smartphone or with the help of the mouse. Especially designed virtual-reality headsets enable a particularly impressive experience. Small head movements provide virtual changes of perspective.

More information on panoramas on *outdooractive.com* in chapter V. 4. c.

¹⁹ Cf. Löffler: Think Content, p. 251ff.

²⁰ Cf. chapter IV. 4. on the use of image rights.

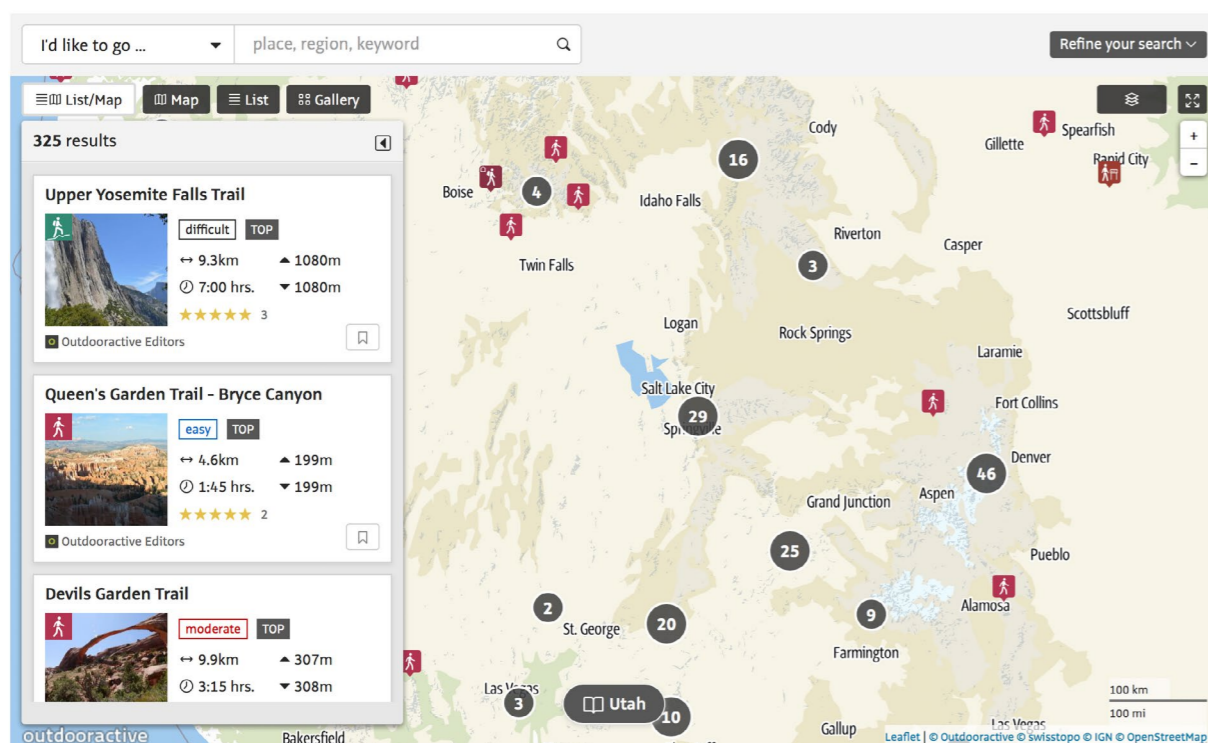
²¹ Cf. chapter IV. 4. b. on the rights of publicity.

8. Interactive maps

In tourism, interactive maps are an integral part of a successful website. If a text talks about routes, places to visit and accommodations, users will immediately wonder where exactly those places are. Particularly for mobile use, the interactive map is vital for navigation.

Interactive maps also contribute to a longer stay and a better click rate on a website. They explain well and quickly where certain places are, how they relate to each other and/or to the respective route.

















The best trails, tracks and routes for outdoor activities



[View of the Outdooractive Route Finder]

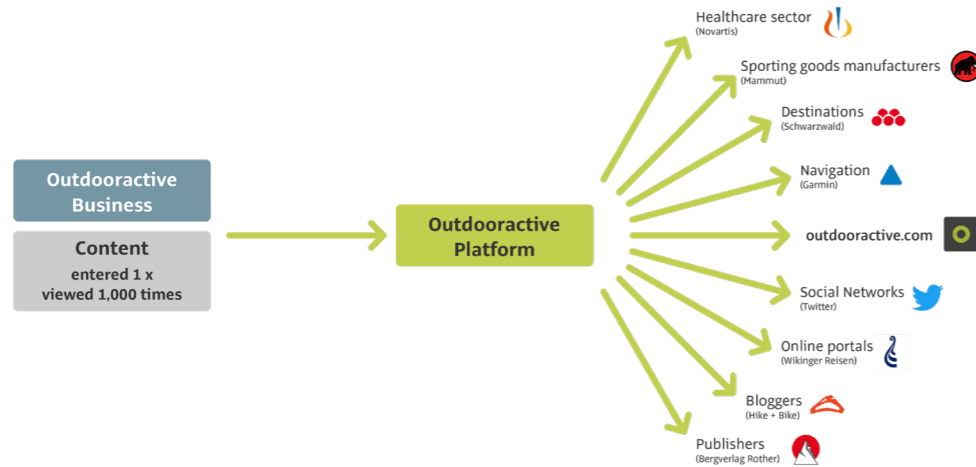
V. Outdooractive as a content platform

Behind the Outdooractive Platform lies an extensive digital database. It includes various datasets of tours and POI, events, bookable offers, lists, current conditions or travel-guide pages as well as location-based stories.

			
Tours	Accommodations	Destinations (POI)	Stories
			
Offers	Ski resorts	Events	Places & regions
			
Literature	Live data (e.g. Weather)	Cartography & network	Road signs & infrastructure
			
Images, videos, webcams	News & feeds	Comments & ratings	User & social network

[Types of data in a tourism destination]

All content is entered once and then published on several portals. This includes *outdooractive.com*, but also partner portals such as *alpenvereinaktiv.com* and numerous Regio, Flexview, API and Destination solutions of more than 2100 partners in tourism, publishing, nature conservation and industry.



[Schematic display of the Outdooractive Content Marketing Network]

In this context it is imperative that content is distributable. For one thing, it affects the quality as only impeccably researched and well-structured content should be distributed.

Secondly, content needs to be free of user restrictions. Content marketing often fails when content is restricted by copyrights – and thus not allowed to be used by the broad mass.

1. Where does content come from?

Content on the Outdooractive Platform is created by three parties: the Outdooractive Team, partners and the Outdooractive Community that consists of more than 1,500,000 members.²²

Each of the above mentioned groups has different entitlements. Community members can create routes and lists, leave comments or update current conditions.

Partners are able to add/maintain POI and to depict events and bookable offers. Destination customers may edit the travel-guide pages of their region.

Some areas are reserved for the Outdooractive Content Services Team. This includes creating most travel-guide pages, location-based stories or ski-resort descriptions.

²² As of November 2019.

2. Linking different types of content

Linking different types of content within one platform enables the creation of a unique informational structure. The most important connections are based on POI. Thus, POI can certainly be regarded as the basis of the Outdooractive Platform.

a. POI categories

There are roughly 400 different categories available for the structuring of POI – from summits and railway stations to accommodations and miniature golf courses. Every POI can be assigned to a category. Categories are divided into different groups: leisure, culture, sports, landscape, gastronomy, transport, retailers, service, health, accommodations, huts and ski resorts.

Every element is visualized on the map by an icon whose color corresponds to its group. Most POI are depicted with a white background; important content and content that is relevant to the Outdooractive Platform has a colored marker.

Not all POI categories are relevant to the front end search (e.g. transmitter masts, traffic training centers). Outdooractive includes a further categorization of POI: the so-called *places to visit*. This classification is independent of categories and regulates whether POI are published in the places-to-visit webapp or only displayed as waypoints of a route.

- **Group 1:** These POI are never places to visit (e.g. parking lots, tourist informations). They aren't shown in the front end autonomously, but only appear as waypoints of a route.
- **Group 2:** These POI are always places to visit (e.g. museums, lookout towers). They are displayed separately in the front end as "Places to visit".
- **Group 3:** These POI can be assigned as places to visit in the Content Manager (e.g. chapels, bridges). They are displayed under "Places to visit" if you tick the according box in the "Description" tab. This marker shouldn't be used too frequently.

There are a few categories in the accommodation subdivision that are automatically attributed as places to visit, e.g. huts and mountain restaurants. For other categories you have to set this attribution manually, e.g. for inns. At this point it is important to note that inns can only be considered as places to visit when they are located outside of a town/village.

b. Maintaining and assigning POI

Regardless of the content you want to create: You should always start from the bottom. If you maintain POI first, you don't only avoid unnecessary work, but also significantly contribute to the platform – and to your own visibility.

Whenever a POI is saved, the Content Manager automatically creates 15 to 20 different content relations (e.g. to the region, state or nature reserve in which the point is located). Such relations can also be created manually, for example when assigning a POI to a route.

Routes, events and offers are rather autonomous content. POI, however, can be combined with all other content types. If you maintain them well once, it will pay off time and time again.

The effort of writing route descriptions reduces significantly if you can rely on timeless and well-researched POI texts. Nevertheless, the most important advantage is the image and video material that POI provide.

Media that has been uploaded with a POI is automatically available in the media section of linked content. Thus, you can reuse material you have already uploaded without any additional effort. You can also use images of other platform users to illustrate your content. As long as the information on author and source (as well as the license, if applicable) remains valid, this is absolutely legal.

3. Community of solidarity and open data

Currently, the Outdooractive Platform is based on a community of solidarity. This means, everyone who adds content to the database is simultaneously allowed to use content of other authors.

In comparison to the distribution, the possibilities of editing a dataset still remain limited to a certain extent. The current database strictly administers client-based content. This means that every user group has the rights to their own content and members of other user groups cannot edit said content. This regulation excludes that other parties provide material for the improvement of your content.

Neuschwanstein

All contents (896) Accommodation (230) **Sights (37)** Lists (1) Tours (452) Offers (39) Books & Maps (4) Current conditions (14) Ski Resorts (2) Partners (1) Travel Guide (115) Authors (1)

CASTLE - ALLGAEU
Neuschwanstein castle
Neuschwanstein Castle in Schwangau is probably the most famous castle in the world. ...
by Svenja Rödiger, Outdooractive Redaktion

STRONGHOLD - OSTALLGAEU
Schloss Neuschwanstein
Neuschwanstein lockt jährlich Millionen Besucher. Der große Traum Ludwigs thront ...
Füssen Tourismus und Marketing

CASTLE - ALLGAEU
Neuschwanstein castle
Schloss Neuschwanstein, der zu Stein gewordenen Traum des bayerischen Märchenkönigs ...
Touristinformation Schwangau

CASTLE - ALLGAEU
Neuschwanstein castle
Schloss Neuschwanstein Von König Ludwig II. erbaut, zählt Schloss Neuschwanstein heute ...
Tourist Information Schwangau, Outdooractive Redaktion

[Data quantity of a search on *outdooractive.com* (as of September 2016)]

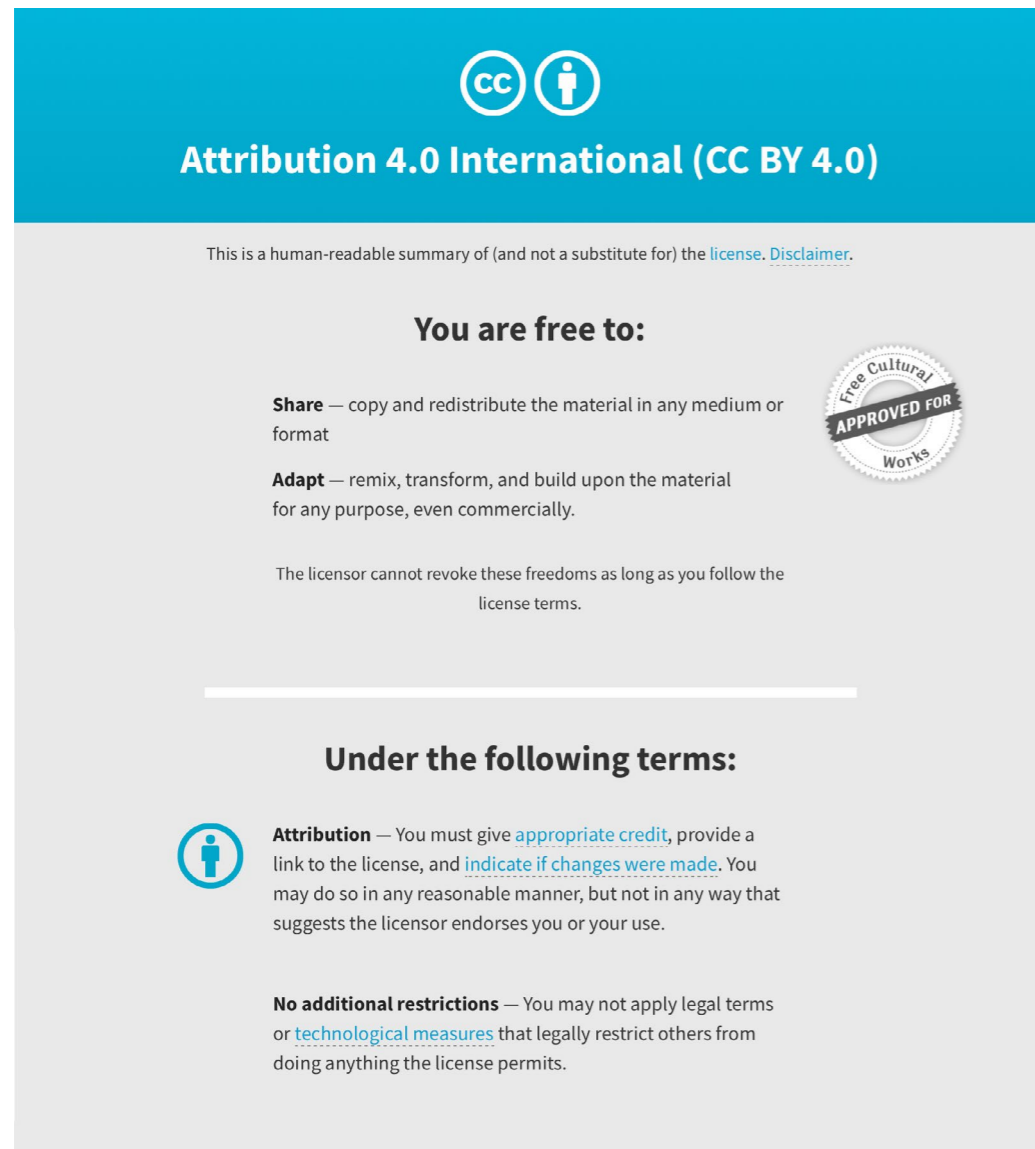
Result: There are many isolated, not very well maintained data sets for one and the same object. Considering the growing pile of data garbage, this development isn't very favorable.

The experience of Outdooractive regarding data quality shows that the community of solidarity slowly should be replaced by an open-data model. To ensure that information is

distributed as widely as possible, it needs to be high-quality and accessible to everyone.

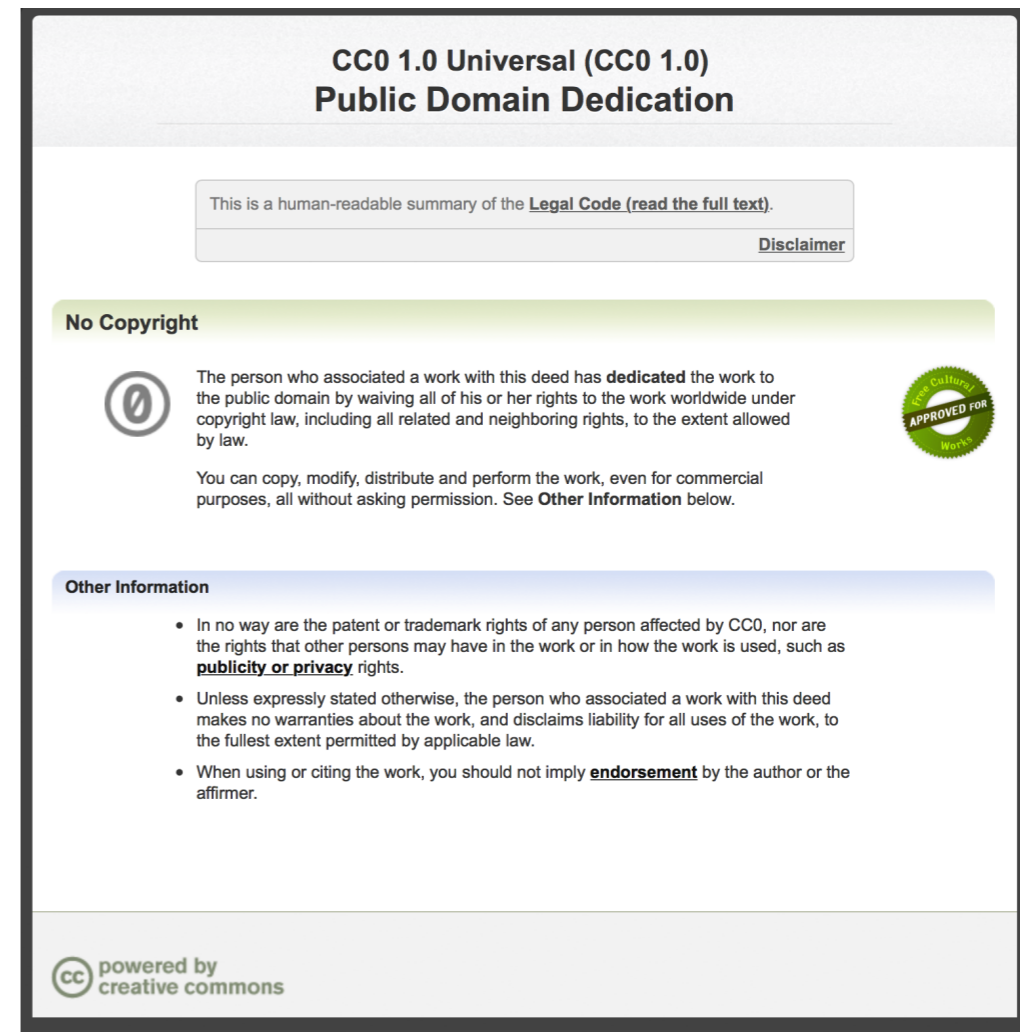
We recommend to put touristic content under the open-source license CC-BY-4.0. This allows everyone to distribute and edit content. The author will be mentioned by name. This significantly contributes to the quality of data and the prevention of duplicates.

Example: *Hans Meier, Vorarlberg Tourism (CC-BY-4.0)*



[Creative Commons license CC-BY-4.0]

All changes and additions of content are subordinate to the CC0 (1.0) license. The author of the additions waives his/her rights to be named.



[Creative Commons license CC0 1.0]

What can each individual do to promote Open Data?

It is possible to mark content created in Outdooractive Content Manager as Open Data. In this way, it can be distributed in a controlled and legally flawless way. The following Creative Commons licenses are available in the Content Manager:

- CC0
- CC BY
- CC-BY-SA
- CC-BY-ND

An overview of Creative Commons licenses is provided in Chapter IV. 4. a.

In order to make tourist data accessible to everyone, Outdooractive has created the independent and non-commercial platform *opentourism.net*.

All contents that underlie a Creative Commons license automatically appear on *opentourism.net* and can be downloaded there. In the future, the portal will not only be open to Outdooractive partners, but accessible to everyone. In addition, the portal will be expanded with further tourism categories.

Until then, the primary goal should be to avoid creating unnecessary duplicates. You should always check whether content already exists on the platform. In doing so, you need to consider all user groups and not just yours.

Once a content already exists, it should only be duplicated in exceptional cases. For example, when existing content belongs to a different user group (which means it mustn't be edited) but isn't sufficiently maintained. All content of the own user group can and should be improved any time if necessary.

More information on user groups in chapter VI. 2.

4. The Outdooractive Platform as media database

A successful integration of media is a central topic for a platform such as Outdooractive. *Where do images come from? How are they managed? What does a good media gallery look like?* This chapter takes a closer look at all those questions.

a. Using images

Chapter IV. 5. describes a few possibilities on how to find appropriate image material for your web presence. Online image databases sell images with the according user rights, others provide license-free images or material that is free of charge. The search of appropriate images always requires time and effort. It is, however, significantly easier if a platform is based on a community of solidarity.

Images which are uploaded by customers, users or staff members of the Outdooractive Platform can be used on all websites that are operated by Outdooractive free of charge, repeatedly and regardless of content, place or time. Thanks to the simple keyword search in the media browser, it is rather easy to find fitting image and video material.²³

Outdooractive is authorized to present, to publish, to duplicate, to distribute, to lease and to digitize the works on online and offline networks. Moreover, the provider has the right

²³ Cf. chapter V. 4. c. on the media browser.

to save them electronically, to make them available to internal and external users and to use them for customary advertising purposes.²⁴

Meaning: If someone adds an image to the database, everyone is free to use said image to illustrate their content on *outdooractive.com* and on all other channels provided by Outdooractive.

b. Copyrighted material

If you upload your own material to the platform, you can do so without hesitation. When uploading data, the name of the active user is entered in the box "author" by default whereas the according user group is named in the box "source".

If you want to use an image that isn't yours, it is necessary to ask for permission of the according photographer to publish the image on the Outdooractive Platform including all output channels. Unless the author doesn't want to be named, the name appears in the box "author".

The Content Manager uses the image license *all rights reserved* by default. If an image was published under a different license, it can be selected in the drop-down menu.

License-free images can only be uploaded to the Outdooractive Platform if the respective terms of use allow it. If the license isn't entirely clear, the image must not be uploaded.²⁵

Caution: The person uploading an image to the Outdooractive Platform is personally liable and can be sued if necessary.

c. Uploading images and creating a gallery

The "Media" tab provides a good overview of all image and video material that is assigned to a content. It also serves to upload media data to the Content Manager.

Images can be assigned to the media gallery in different ways:

- **Gallery:** The image appears in the slider of the detail page.
- **Thumbnail image:** The image is displayed in the list view and in the pop-up screen on the map.
- **Logo:** The logo is displayed small and half-transparent as part of the media gallery.
- **Topo:** vertical depiction of the climbing wall (e.g. for alpine climbing)

²⁴ Cf. §7 General Terms and Conditions of the Outdooractive GmbH.

²⁵ Cf. chapter IV. 4. on image rights.

The media browser

Click “Add media” to open the media browser. It enables you to upload images and videos or link them if they have already been uploaded with other content. The suggestions are arranged according to various criteria:

- **Images of linked content:** When creating the media gallery, all media that has been uploaded to a linked content is displayed.
- **Images from comments:** If users upload media in the comment section, these material is available in the media browser.
- **Recently uploaded media:** If linked content or comments don't provide any media, recently uploaded images and videos are displayed.

The media browser provides a keyword search, too. After entering a search term, the browser shows all images and videos that carry the required keyword in their title. It furthermore shows media that is linked to a content carrying the required keyword in the title.

If you don't find any appropriate material in the media browser, you can also upload images and videos by yourself. With every upload you can add up to 12 images and 50 MB at once – or link 12 videos.²⁶

Media gallery POI

The media gallery of a POI includes at least one and a maximum of ten images that depict the POI and its surroundings. The media gallery of a hotel or restaurant can show what the place looks like from the inside and outside. The media gallery of a mountain summit can depict the climb and the summit cross, but also what the mountain looks like from a neighboring peak. Therefore: If you have good material, it makes sense to upload it to all related POI – not just to the POI that you are currently editing.

Not all images of a POI gallery need to be chosen for the gallery of a linked route. Thus, you don't need to worry about uploading images that show the POI during different seasons – a picture taken in summer doesn't automatically end up in the gallery of a snowshoeing route.

Keeping the open-data model in mind, this also provides the advantage that you don't have to adopt the images of others authors to your route unless you want to.

²⁶ Cf. chapter V. 4. e. on uploading videos.

Media gallery route

The recommended number of pictures per route lies between ten and 25. The number mainly depends on the length and character of a route. The gallery should provide a decent mix of landscape and pictures of athletes²⁷ on the route. You should avoid placing numerous images that are very similar to each other.

As a matter of principle, the images of a route should be put in chronological order. The order can be modified via drag&drop. Strictly speaking, this would mean that you start your gallery with pictures of e.g. the parking lot. However, the first image of a gallery should be a representative title image (maybe even a panorama). If you mark it as “Thumbnail image”, it is displayed prominently in the list view when searching the route on *outdooractive.com*.

When editing multistage tours, you choose the most beautiful images of one stage for the individual route gallery. After that you select the best images from every single stage and design the gallery of the overall tour. Once again, you shouldn't choose more than 25 images.

If the image has information about the georeference in the metadata, it is displayed in the interactive map in the frontend exactly where it was created. If this georeference is missing, it can be added manually in the Content Manager.

Size, quality, format

Whenever images are displayed on the Outdooractive Platform, 2500 pixel in width is regarded as a suitable dimension. This way, it is ensured that even the biggest image sliders and high-resolution displays show the media correctly. Images of smaller dimensions might be displayed with a grey frame. We avoid the automatic scaling of images in order to not influence their quality. In case you are unsure about the dimensions of your image, stick to the principle *the bigger the better*.

To ensure that your content is ideally displayed on the Outdooractive Platform, the Content Manager automatically adapts images to the frame given by the gallery slider. This doesn't have any effect on the original data – it can still be downloaded in its original size.

The typical aspect ratio of pictures in landscape format is 16:9. From an aspect ratio of 2,19:1 upwards, the media gallery automatically displays pictures as panoramas. The automated pan creates the impression of a moving image. However, if panoramas are only slightly wider than 2,19:1, they might appear rather hectic on bigger displays. Thus, if you want to use panoramas, we recommend a bigger scale – at least 3,5:1.

²⁷ Cf. chapter IV. 4. b. on the right of publicity.

If you upload an image in the CMYK color mode, it might end up grey in the media gallery. You can avoid this by opening the original data with a common image-editing program, saving a copy in the RGB color mode and uploading it to the platform.

The alt attribute of images that have been uploaded to the Outdooractive Content Manager is identical to the image title.²⁸ It should therefore be translated into all relevant languages. When you download a picture, the image title remains within the file.

d. Exif data

When an image is captured in JPG format, modern cameras automatically create so-called *Exif data*. These provide information about the date, the time and the exact geo coordinates where the picture was taken. In addition, they provide information such as camera type, focal length, aperture values, exposure time and flash setting.

Further references to the author or the image's license can be added to the metadata by a right click into the menu item "details".

Apart from image alignment and size, this data isn't relevant to the search-engine ranking. It doesn't contain any valuable information about the image content and is thus ignored by search-engine bots.

Nevertheless, all Exif information is stored and archived in the Outdooractive image database. The data is used, for example, to locate the uploaded images geographically. When clicking on the map of a route, georeferenced images are displayed exactly where they were taken.

e. Videos and 3D elements on the Outdooractive Platform

There are several spots on the Outdooractive Platform where videos can be integrated. Included in the media galleries of routes, POI and travel-guide pages, short sequences significantly assist in improving the illustration of content.

A video should only consist of moving images. The integration of static images is not contemporary. If the technical prerequisites are provided, it makes sense to combine camera and drone footage.

All videos need to be uploaded to YouTube first. You can link the relevant content on the Outdooractive Platform afterwards. The videos should meet the following requirements to be displayed perfectly:

- **Quality:** HD up to 4K
- **Side ratio:** 16:9 widescreen
- **Video-Codec:** H.264
- **Format:** mpeg4

If a video is part of the media gallery, it is ideally presented on the first position. An alternative thumbnail image can be picked in case that the automatically generated thumbnail isn't high-quality and/or not particularly meaningful.

POI video

A POI video is a short introduction that shows a POI's most beautiful sides²⁹ in roughly 20 seconds. Creative elements are fundamental for POI videos as they provide variety in an otherwise rather one-sided sequence. Recordings of different points of view (*5-shot rule*) are just as important as alternating zoom levels.

Tour video

An ideal tour video lasts roughly 60 to 70 seconds. It includes scenic features as well as shots of people³⁰ at especially meaningful sites. Different sequences of POI videos can be used for tour videos. It is important that the combined sequences tell the best possible story and avoid obvious jumps.

3D video

All users who have an Outdooractive Pro or Pro+ subscription or access to Outdooractive Business can have 3D flight videos created from their own published routes.

This happens either in the Content Manager under the tab "Export" or in the frontend after clicking on "Edit Route" and "Media". All videos are automatically published in the Outdooractive YouTube channel and displayed in the gallery of the respective route.

If you only want to view videos that are already linked to a route, you don't need a Pro subscription.

3D flight

The 3D flight is a map-based feature available only to Pro+ subscribers. A click on the "3D flight" button (which automatically appears in the map's top left corner for routes and ski resorts) creates a three-dimensional overview of the content.

²⁸ Cf. chapter IV. 3. on SEO for images.

²⁹ Cf. chapter IV. 4. c. on objects and buildings.

³⁰ Cf. chapter IV. 4. b. on the right of publicity.

All POI linked to the route are clickable in the map and link to the corresponding detail page on *outdooractive.com*. At the end of the sequence, the map itself can be rotated so that you can view all details of the content again.

VI. Content creation with Outdooractive Business – part 1: structure / functioning

1. General information

Outdooractive Business (*business.outdooractive.com/en/*) is a multi-module management system for georeferenced data and tourist content. The following chapters provide an overview of the individual applications and explain how to enter tourism content into the Outdooractive database according to current standards.

a. Current internet browser

When entering complex data, the Outdooractive Content Manager automatically takes care of a number of tasks; however, an efficient internet browser (e.g. *Mozilla Firefox* or *Google Chrome*) is required. Outdooractive Business is neither optimized for older versions of the *Internet Explorer* nor for *Microsoft Edge*.

b. Views in the Content Manager

The Content Manager is the central module for the creation of tourism content inside Outdooractive Business. The dashboard displays an individual overview for each user. This consists of an action stream with recently edited elements from the own user group as well as several informative diagrams on reach, rank and community rating. The links in the footer lead to the platform, the Outdooractive corporate website and the FAQ.

Users that are signed-in can navigate to their profiles in the top right corner or via the menu item "settings" below the profile picture on the left. There they maintain contact information, choose their preferred activities and list additional qualifications. The text box provides space for a short introduction. Users can also manage email notifications in their profile and change the password.

Well maintained profiles give a face to the user group, make content more authentic and show other users that they can turn to the author if they have questions or problems regarding the content.

On the left hand side you will find the main menu, where you can navigate to the contents of your own user group. There you can also create new content.

The “Contents” tab shows different categories of sorting. You can look at your own content or all content of your own group as well as filter results according to content type, workflow or date of creation.

There is a keyword search in the top left corner. Once you have sent a search request and see a list of results, you can further narrow down the search with filters.

c. Outdooractive Business App

With an Outdooractive Business account you can also log into the Outdooractive Business App and edit routes and current conditions as well as upload media in the form of photos and documents. Contents are automatically synchronized between web and app.

In addition to mobile content maintenance, the Business App helps with the digital trail management. For example, you can record signpost locations or document defects.

Information on how to create routes in the Business App in chapter VII. 1. f.

2. User and user groups

Within Outdooractive Business, every partner has its own user group. It includes all content created by the partner - marked with source and logo. Access to their own user group is via the Outdooractive Business homepage and click on “User administration” in the left menu.

By default, every member of a user group has an individual user account with personal login data and a profile that is displayed next to the content. We strongly recommend to indicate the author when displaying content on *outdooractive.com*. Authors should use their real names. Every author should have a properly maintained profile page and also react when other users comment on his/her content.

If users don't want to share their name with the content, this can be adjusted in the settings. The front end then only shows the respective user group that will also receive all notifications regarding the content.

If members leave the organization, content can be transferred to successors to assure it remains up-to-date.

User groups can also be arranged hierarchically. For example, the user group of a state can have access to the content of the underlying tourism regions. They in turn have access to the content of districts, and those to the content of their municipalities.

a. User role

Whenever a new user account is created, a user role is assigned to it. This user role can be changed by the administrator at all times. There are five different user roles:

1. **Writers** can create, edit and delete own content, but not publish it. Writers have access to all content of their user group, but they can only view it.
2. **Writers extended** can create, edit, delete and publish own content. Writers extended have access to all content of their user group, but they can only view it.
3. **Editors** can create, edit and delete own content, but not publish it. Editors have access to all content of their user group. They can view and edit it, but neither delete nor publish it.
4. **Publishers** can create, edit, delete and publish own content. Publishers have access to all content of their user group. They can view, edit, delete and publish it. If no role is assigned to a new user, he/she automatically becomes a publisher.
5. **Administrators** can create, edit, delete and publish own content. Administrators have access to all content of their user group. They can view, edit, delete and publish it. Administrators can create new user accounts as well as administer and shut down existing ones. They can invite users of other user groups and edit own projects.

b. User status

User accounts have one of the following statuses:

1. **active:** Users can login and are displayed as members of the user group on the Outdooractive Platform.
2. **inactive:** Users can login, but aren't displayed as members of the user group on the Outdooractive Platform.
3. **locked:** Users cannot login and are no longer displayed as members of the user group on the Outdooractive Platform.

c. Creating and inviting users

The administrator of a user group can create new user profiles and invite existing users to the own user group. A person only receives a new user account if he/she doesn't already have one – not even in a different user group. Stating the surname, first name, email

address, password and role are mandatory for creating a new account. The role can be changed subsequently.

User Management > User > Create User

If someone already has an account, he/she can be invited to each other user group. The user role is assigned with the invitation, it doesn't have to be the same as in other groups. To change the role of invited users, however, the administrator needs to reject and then re-invite them:

User Management > Groups > Group Users > Invite User

d. Archiving users

It is not possible to completely delete individual user accounts. However, administrators of a user group can archive user accounts assigned to their group. In this way, the user's email address is unblocked and can be used to create a new account. The account itself is automatically set to status "locked".

User Management > User > Status > Archive User

The option to archive a user is only available as long as the user account is not locked.

e. Content of a user group

Users can only create and edit content within their own user group. The top right corner indicates what account and which user group is logged in. There, you can also edit your profile, set the system language, log out and switch the user group – provided you have the necessary access rights.

In the event that users create content on behalf of a third party, the name of the user can be manually adjusted in the "Description"/ "Details" tab of the respective content. Only Outdooractive can change the source/user group of content. The Content Services Team is in charge of such changes.

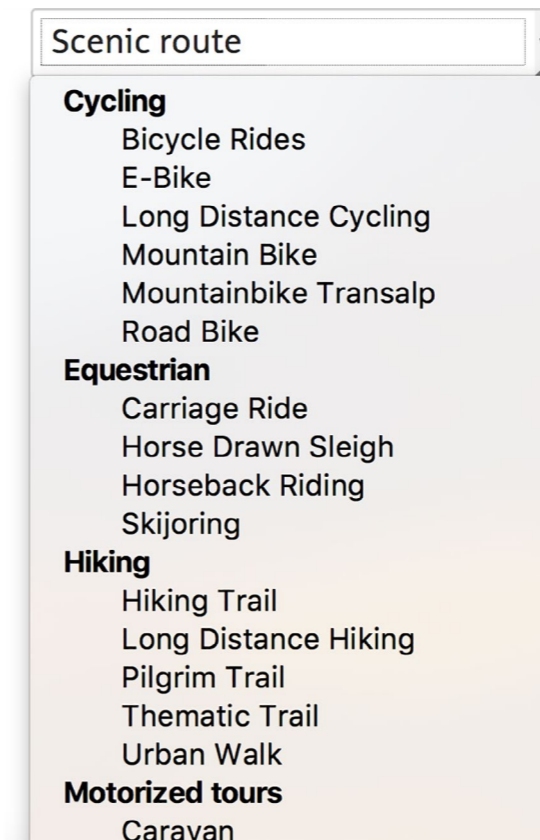
VII. Content creation with Outdooractive Business – part 2: the creation of content

1. Routes

a. Route

The basis of every route is its exact course. It is created and edited in the Content Manager under the menu item "Route" before being visualized on the web map and the PDF printout.

Before you create, upload or edit a route, you need to choose the according activity. The Outdooractive Routing Engine automatically adjusts a track to the given trail network. If the activity is changed afterwards, the route changes accordingly.



[Selecting an activity in the Outdooractive Content Manager]

Hints for the distinction of similar activities:

- **Hiking Trails** always run on well-trodden paths.
- **Mountain Hikes** lead at least partially through trackless terrain.
- **Via Ferratas** are at least partially secured with cables and steps.
- **Alpine Routes** always lead over a glacier.
- **Bicycle Rides** are all routes that don't require a specific type of bicycle – regardless of whether users end up taking a mountain bike or a standard bicycle.
- **Mountain Bike** routes always have a trail part.
- **Road Bike** routes always lead over paved roads.

A few tips to differentiate between Mountain Hikes and Hiking Trails:

Mountain Hikes (need to meet at least three of the following criteria):

- Individual passages with a higher risk of falling require surefootedness and a head for heights.
- Might include short climbing passages.
- Routes often take you above the treeline.
- difficult character due to its length, difference in altitude, exposed position and alpine hazards (e.g. sudden drops in temperature)
- Usually, reaching a summit is the goal.
- mostly on narrow mountain trails, ferratas or through trackless terrain

Hiking Trail (need to meet at least three of the following criteria):

- No passages with increased risk of falling; profound surefootedness and a head for heights aren't required.
- routes through settled areas and forests; mostly below the treeline
- no difficult character due to alpine hazards, because of the route's short length and/or close proximity to accommodations and residential areas.
- Usually, the routes lead to huts, guest houses and sights.
- mostly on forest roads and wide hiking trails

Navigation on the map

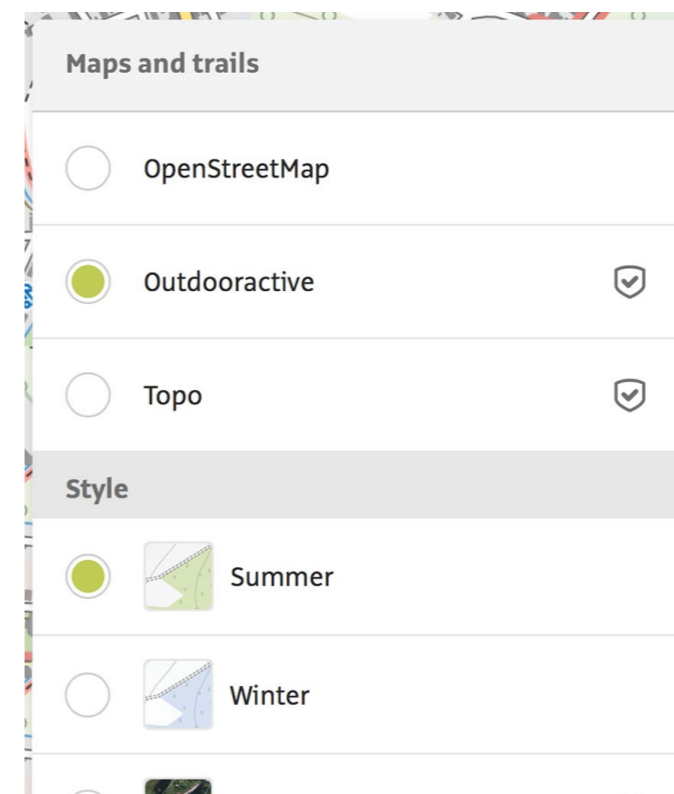
The tools +/- in the top right corner of the map provide the ability to zoom in and out. An alternative is to change the scale of the map with the mouse wheel. To move the map section, hold the left mouse button and move to the requested section.

Uploading existing GPS data

To upload data, you need a file in the GPX format. Other formats can be converted on gpsies.com. You can only upload one file per route; every new file overwrites the previous one.

Tracks should always be adjusted to the trail network – so to say *traced with the routing function on the trail network*. In doing so you should check whether the map and the self-recorded track comply with the reality and – if there are deviations – which one fits best.

Satellite image and OSM assist you in finding tracks that the Outdooractive Map might not have included yet. If you switch to OSM, the routing engine uses the OSM trail network.



[You can choose between different map types.]

To adjust a track to the Outdooractive Map, you need to take a look at the trail network. If the route largely complies with the network, the geometry should be deleted at its entirety and then re-tracked. The original track is still visible on the map if you tick "Show original". If this button is missing, it helps to download the track in the "Export" tab and upload it again under "Route".

If the route leads mostly through territory without a trail network, it is wise to delete only the passages that comply with the trail network and route those. The other passages keep the untreated track. Track irregularities such as anomalies due to a bad GPS signal, accumulations of track points due to extended stops etc. have to be adjusted nonetheless; aerial views tend to be very helpful.

Creating a track with the tools of the Content Manager



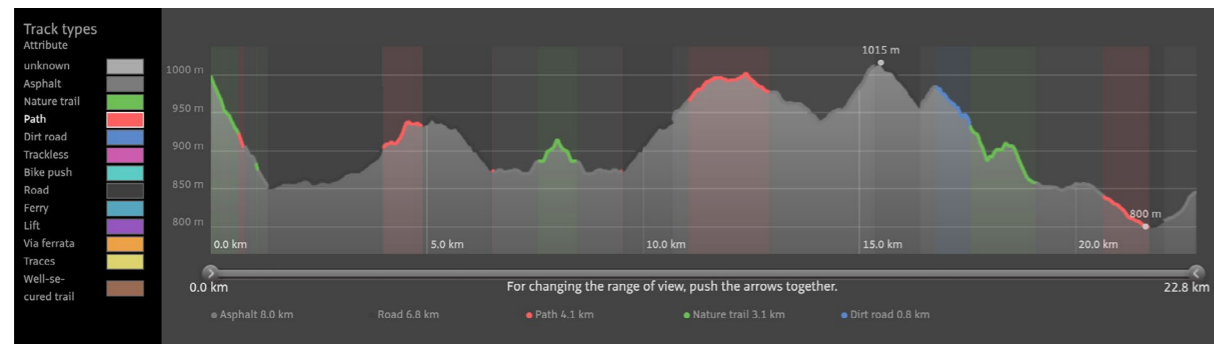
[Tools to edit tracks]

1. Routing tool to create tracks on the trail network
2. Tool to create a free connection between two points
3. Select several points in order to shift or delete them
4. Edit track types
5. Undo previous step
6. Restore previous step

Edit track types

Every single part of a route should be attributed with the according track type. Once a track is routed, the track types are automatically adjusted by the system. If necessary, they can still be changed manually. Just click "Edit track types", choose a color under "Attribute" and mark the relevant section in the elevation profile.

These adjustments serve to improve the quality of the individual route. But you can also inform Outdooractive about wrong track types via the help button in the front end. Such info will be considered by the Cartography Team in the next map update. The improvement of data serves as basis for all future planning of routes.



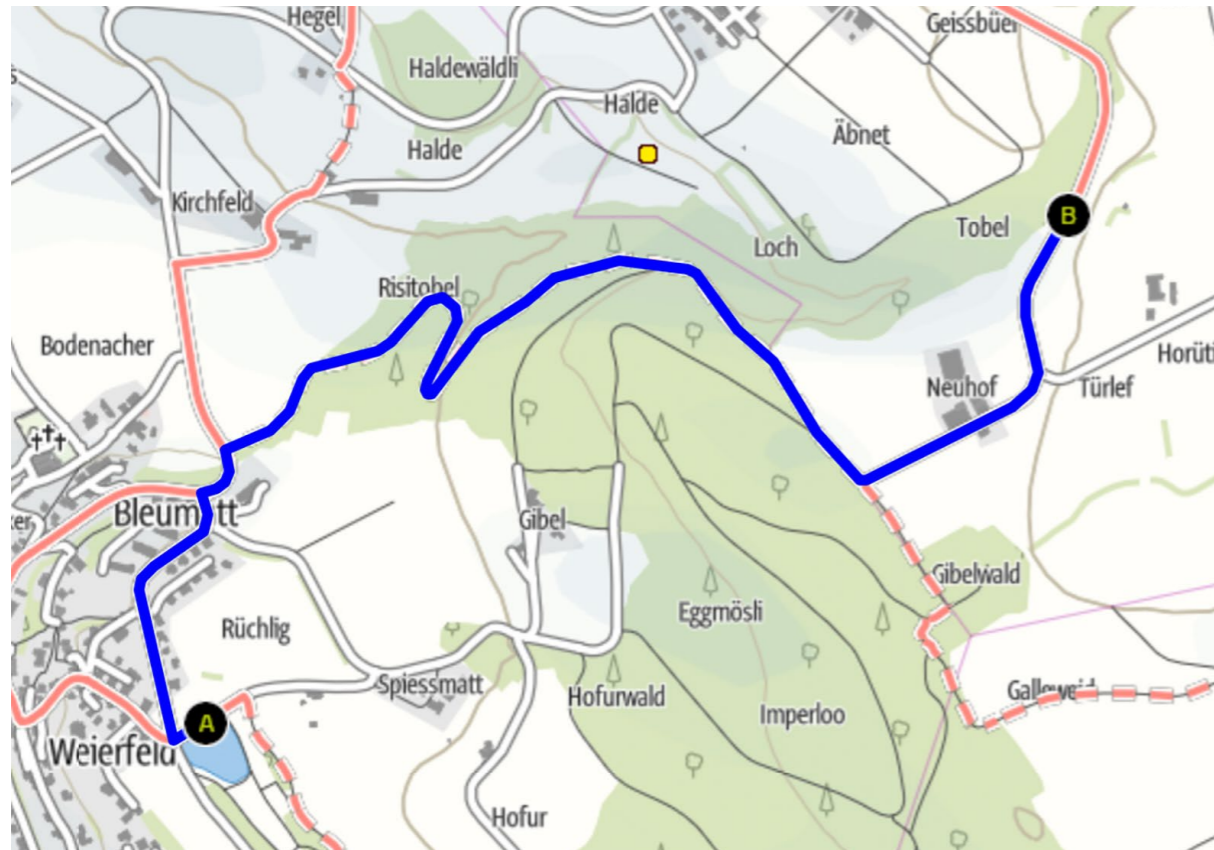
[Edit track types]

Track type	Definition	
Unknown	Track type isn't defined (default setup).	Grey
Asphalt	paved biking and hiking trails as well as side roads with little traffic	Dark grey
Nature trail	unpaved service road (forest, meadow or mountain path), at least 1 m wide and suitable for cross-country vehicles	Green
Path	unpaved trail, not more than 1 m wide, only manageable by foot or by bicycle	Red
Dirt road	at least 2 m wide, can be used by cars due to a closed gravel or grit surface	Blue
Trackless	not part of the map's trail network – e.g. tracks that lead through water, mudflat or snow	Purple
Bike push	sections that force cyclists to push their bike as they cannot be driven on	Teal
Road	main roads (federal highways, state roads, country roads, district roads and busy in-town streets)	Black
Ferry	ferry service	Light blue
Lift	mountain railway, lift	Dark purple
Via ferrata	via ferrata	Orange
Traces	unpaved trail, not necessarily marked but principally recognizable as such	Yellow-green
Well-secured trail	alpine mountain trail with safety ropes and step aids	Brown

[Overview of all track types in the Outdooractive Content Manager]

Tips & tricks regarding track inputs

- You can only draw up a track from beginning to end. To add points to an existing route, move your mouse over the track and drag the yellow dot to the right spot.



[Adding a waypoint in between two others]

- To switch between routing and manual input in order to edit a section between two routing points (A, B), right-hand-click the relevant section and choose between the following options:
 - Segment with routing
 - Segment without routing
- The way back needs to be entered even if it is exactly the same than the outward trail. Otherwise the route data won't be correct (altitude, length, elevation profile) and a filtered search for specific features provides wrong search results.
- If the route leads over the very same path twice, the track needs to be congruent. This isn't a problem for routes that have been created with the routing tool. However, if a route was created manually or based on unedited GPS recordings, you need to man-

ually adjust the return path by clicking directly on the points of the outward trail or moving existing points on top of each other.

- To reverse the geometry, right-hand-click any dot and choose "Reverse direction".
- Unless you are editing in the highest zoom level, you should avoid putting waypoints in the middle of crossings. The system might route a few meters in the wrong direction if you don't click precisely onto the crossings.
- Please contact the Outdooractive Team if you find map errors. You can report errors or make suggestions via the help function in the footer of Outdooractive Business. The Professional Services Team forwards the information to the Cartography Team that takes care of all problems regarding the map. A relevant link from the Route Finder is helpful.

Example: <https://www.outdooractive.com/en/routes/#zc=14,9.54562,46.81874>

It is also possible to contact the Platform Team via the help button on [outdooractive.com](https://www.outdooractive.com) or via direct message to service@outdooractive.com.

b. Description

Title

A title is crucial when you want to save a route. It shouldn't be longer than 65 characters (including spaces), to make sure that it is viewable on mobile devices and in print. The title needs to be explanatory and informative. A combination of activities, places to visit and the name of the track is usually most helpful for users and search engines.

Bad example: *Stroll through a beautiful forest*

Good example: *South Rim Trail to the Artist Point, Yellowstone National Park*

Summary

The summary provides a first insight into the route by stating the most important keywords such as activity, name of the destination, name of the track or places to visit. This text is automatically highlighted in the front end and displayed in search engine results. It shouldn't be longer than two or three sentences (no paragraphs) or an ellipsis of two or three lines. Ideally, the summary shouldn't have more than 180 characters.

Example: *During the hike of the South Rim Trail in Yellowstone National Park, we reach the „Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone“, where we can admire the impressive Yellowstone River Falls.*

Description

A detailed description of what to expect and see during the route: The experience, character and difficulty/suitability of the route as well as the sights along the way, such as natural characteristics, monuments or places, are paramount for the description. Make sure that the text is readable on mobile devices and doesn't have more than 1000 characters. If you want to describe the navigation of the track, you should use the text box "Turn-by-turn directions". Unlike the description (that aims to give an impression of the route), the turn-by-turn directions give exact information about the course of the route on site.

Author's advice

Personal remarks and recommendations by the authors, e.g. about viewpoints, detours or accommodations; should be relatively short (150 characters max.).

Safety information

Information regarding trail sections, hazards, seasonal features or complicated orientation due to poor visibility

Equipment

The following listing provides the items/equipment you require for every activity that is included on *outdooractive.com* (except for motorized tours). The list is meant to assist you in planning for every case of application – thus it is relatively extensive. According to length and character of a route, the listing needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Hiking Trail: hiking daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and sturdy footwear, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, telescope sticks if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight if necessary, maps

Long Distance Hiking: trekking backpack (approx. 50 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and sturdy footwear, second pair of shoes/sandals if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, change of clothes, telescope sticks, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, travel documents, toilet bag and travel towel, travel detergent and clothesline, camping equipment if necessary (tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, cooking equipment), hut equipment if necessary

Pilgrim trail: trekking backpack (approx. 50 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and sturdy footwear, second pair of shoes/sandals if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, change of clothes, telescope sticks, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, travel documents and pilgrims' identity, toilet bag and travel towel, travel detergent and clothesline, camping equipment if necessary (tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, cooking equipment), hut equipment if necessary

Thematic Trail: cf. Hiking Trail

Urban Walk light daypack (approx. 15 liters) with rain cover, comfortable footwear, adequate outdoor clothing, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water if necessary, street map

Bicycle Rides: roadworthy bike, bike helmet, bicycle daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable sneakers, cycling shoes if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, cycling jersey if necessary, cycling gloves if necessary, bicycle pump, bicycle tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps

Mountain Bike: roadworthy (electric) mountain bike with much spring deflection, bike helmet, full-face or enduro helmet if necessary, elbow and knee protectors if necessary, shin pads and back protector if necessary, bicycle daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, mountain-bike shoes with ankle protection, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers (e.g. functional shirt, cycling jersey, bib shorts, arm and leg warmers), shatterproof bike goggles, full-finger gloves, bicycle pump, bike tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps

Mountainbike Transalp: roadworthy (electric) mountain bike with much spring deflection, bike helmet, cycling backpack (approx. 35 liters) with rain cover, mountain bike shoes with ankle protection, second pair of shoes/sandals, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers (e.g. functional shirt, cycling jersey, bib shorts, arm and leg warmers), change of clothes, shatterproof bike goggles, full-finger gloves, elbow and knee protectors if necessary, shin pads and back protector if necessary, bicycle pump, bike tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors, maps, travel documents, toilet bag and travel towel, travel detergent and clothesline, hut equipment if necessary

Road Bike: roadworthy road bike, bike helmet, bicycle daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, cycling shoes, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers (e.g. cycling

jersey with pockets, padded cycling pants, arm and leg warmers if necessary), shatterproof bike goggles, cycling gloves, bicycle pump, bicycle tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps

Long Distance Cycling: roadworthy (electric) trekking bike, bike helmet, cycling backpack (approx. 35 liters) with rain cover, comfortable sneakers, cycling shoes if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, cycling jersey if necessary, change of clothes, cycling gloves, bicycle pump, bicycle tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors, maps, travel documents, toilet bag and travel towel, travel detergent and clothesline, hut equipment if necessary

E-Bike: electric bike, exchangeable battery, battery charger, bike helmet, bicycle daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable sneakers, cycling shoes if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, cycling jersey if necessary, cycling gloves if necessary, bicycle pump, bicycle tools, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, drink bottle and convenient fixture, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, phone fixture for handlebar if necessary, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps

Nordic Walking: nordic walking sticks (not telescope sticks), light running backpack (approx. 5 to 10 liters) with rain cover if necessary, jogging or walking shoes, adequate and breathable outdoor clothing, nordic walking gloves if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water if necessary, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary

Jogging: running shoes, adequate and breathable clothing, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water if necessary, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary

Trail Running: light running backpack (approx. 5 to 10 liters) with rain cover if necessary, trail running shoes, special running socks if necessary, adequate and breathable clothing in multiple layers, trail running sticks if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps

Inline Skating: roadworthy inline skates, skating or bike helmet, knee, wrist and elbow protection, light daypack (approx. 15 liters) with rain cover if necessary, second pair of shoes/sandals, adequate and breathable clothing in multiple layers, skating sticks if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary

Via Ferrata: climbing harness, climbing set with fall damper, climbing helmet, hiking daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and sturdy footwear, approach shoes if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, climbing gloves, sling and HMS carabines if necessary, safety rope for children and beginners if necessary, sun and rain

protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, telescope sticks for the ascent if necessary, bivouac sack and emergency blanket if necessary

Mountain Hike: hiking daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and sturdy footwear, crampons and gaiters if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, telescope sticks, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket if necessary, hut equipment if necessary

Alpine Route: ice axe, crampons, climbing harness, climbing helmet, twin rope, carabines, figure eight descender, static rope, slings, quickdraws, chocks and friends for routes with long climbing passages, ascender, ice screws, touring backpack (approx. 40 liters) with fixtures for axes and rain cover, alpine boots suitable for crampons, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, gloves, glacier goggles, gaiters if necessary, telescope sticks, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket, hut equipment if necessary

Alpine Climbing: climbing harness, climbing helmet, twin rope, carabines, figure eight descender, static rope, slings, quickdraws, prusik rope, chocks, friends, belay device, climbing backpack (approx. 40 liters) with rain cover, climbing and approach shoes, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Winter Hiking: hiking daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and waterproof winter shoes or sturdy hiking boots, crampons and gaiters if necessary, warm and waterproof clothing in multiple layers, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight if necessary, maps, telescope sticks if necessary

Sledding: toboggan or sled, ski helmet, hiking daypack (approx. 20 liters) with rain cover, comfortable and waterproof winter shoes or sturdy hiking boots, crampons and gaiters if necessary, warm and waterproof clothing in multiple layers, hat/headband, scarf, waterproof gloves, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket if necessary

Ski Touring: tour skis, ski skins, ski crampons if necessary, ski sticks, ski helmet, avalanche set with avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel, ski touring backpack (approx. 30 liters) with avalanche airbag and rain cover, ski touring boots, ski socks, warm and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, ski touring coat and pants, light gloves for the ascent, warm gloves for the descent, hat/headband, skiing goggles if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Snowshoes: snowshoes, telescope sticks with larger stick plates, avalanche set with avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel, touring backpack (approx. 30 liters) with avalanche airbag and rain cover if necessary, comfortable and waterproof winter shoes or sturdy hiking boots that fit into the binding, gaiters if necessary, warm and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, skiing coat and pants, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, skiing goggles if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Cross-Country skiing: cross-country skis (classic or skating), cross-country ski sticks, light backpack (approx. 5 to 10 liters) with rain cover if necessary, cross-country ski boots, adequate and breathable clothing, hat/headband, light gloves, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water if necessary, thermos flask with a hot drink if necessary, first aid kit, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, bivouac sack and emergency blanket if necessary

Backcountry Skiing: freeride skis, ski skins, ski crampons if necessary, ski sticks, ski helmet, avalanche set with avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel, ski touring backpack (approx. 30 liters) with avalanche airbag and rain cover, freeride ski boots, warm and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, skiing coat and pants, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, skiing goggles, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Ice Climbing: ice devices, crampons, climbing harness, climbing helmet, waterproof half rope, carabines, ice screws and screwdriver, figure eight descender, static rope, slings, quickdraws, prusik rope, chocks, friends, belay device, avalanche set if necessary, climbing backpack (approx. 40 liters) with axe fixture and rain cover, alpine boots suitable for crampons, gaiters if necessary, waterproof and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Ice Tour: ice axe, crampons, climbing harness, climbing helmet, twin rope, carabines, figure eight descender, static rope, slings, quickdraws, chocks, friends, ascender, ice screws, touring backpack (approx. 40 liters) with axe fixture and rain cover, alpine boots suitable for crampons, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, gloves, glacier goggles, gaiters if necessary, telescope sticks, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket, hut equipment if necessary

Long Distance Ski Touring: tour skis, ski skins, ski crampons if necessary, ski sticks, ski helmet, avalanche set with avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel, ski touring backpack (approx. 40 liters) with avalanche airbag and rain cover, ski touring boots, ski socks, warm and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, ski touring coat and pants, change of clothes, light gloves for the ascent, warm gloves for the descent, hat/headband,

scarf, skiing goggles if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, thermos flask with a hot drink, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors if necessary, maps, bivouac sack and emergency blanket, repair kit (ski skin tightener, spray adhesive, wire, wax, tape, stick plates), travel documents, toilet bag and travel towel, travel detergent and clothesline, hut equipment

Ski Circuit: skis, ski sticks, ski helmet, light daypack (approx. 15 liters) with rain cover if necessary, ski boots, ski socks, warm and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, skiing coat and pants, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, skiing goggles, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water if necessary, thermos flask with hot drink if necessary, mobile phone, bivouac sack and emergency blanket

Canyoning: wetsuit, neoprene socks, canyoning harness, buoyancy aid, helmet, static rope, emergency rope, descender, belay device, cross-cut knife and scissors, alarm whistle, screw or climbing carabines, gimlet set, well-fitting shoes with tread, thermal underwear if necessary, waterproof gloves, swimsuit, spare clothes, throw bag, diving goggles, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight

Canoe: canoe, (canoe-) paddle, substitute paddle, life vest, helmet, water shovel, canoe cart if necessary, waterproof transportation bag (approx. 20 liters) or waterproof box, sturdy and waterproof footwear, sandals if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, wetsuit if necessary, swimsuit, thick rope, carabines, throw bag if necessary, cushion, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, lake or river map, camping equipment if necessary (tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, cooking equipment)

Kayak: kayak, paddle, substitute paddle, life vest, spray deck, helmet, water shovel, canoe cart if necessary, waterproof transportation bag (approx. 20 liters) or waterproof box, sturdy and waterproof footwear, sandals if necessary, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, wetsuit if necessary, swimsuit, thick rope, carabines, throw bag if necessary, paddle float if necessary, cushion, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, lake or river map

Rafting: dinghy, (canoe-) paddle, substitute paddle, life vest, helmet, water shovel, waterproof transportation bag (approx. 20 liters) or waterproof box, wild-water footwear, wetsuit, thermal underwear if necessary, swimsuit, thick rope, carabines, throw bag if necessary, cushion if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, river map

Carriage Ride: horse(s), carriage, harness, bridle with bit, blinders if necessary, reins, riding lash, comfortable and sturdy footwear, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, riding gloves if necessary, hoof scratcher, blanket for driver and guests if necessary, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors for carriage and horses

Horseback Riding: horse, saddle, bridle with bit, riding lash if necessary, riding helmet, back protector if necessary, light daypack (approx. 15 liters) with rain cover if necessary, riding boots/shoes, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, riding pants if necessary, riding gloves, hoof scratcher, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors for horse and rider

Horse Drawn Sleigh: horse(s), horse sleigh, harness, bridle with bit, blinders if necessary, reins, riding lash, sturdy and comfortable footwear, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, hoof scratcher, blanket for driver and guests, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors for carriage and horses

Skijoring: horse, harness, bridle, saddle if necessary, blinders if necessary, reins, riding lash if necessary, skis, ski or riding helmet, small backpack (approx. 15 liters) with rain cover if necessary, sturdy and warm footwear for the rider, ski boots for the skier, adequate and durable outdoor clothing in multiple layers, skiing coat and pants if necessary, hat/headband, scarf, gloves, hoof scratcher, sun and rain protection, snacks and drinking water, first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone, headlight and reflectors for skier/rider and horse

Tips, hints and links

Addresses of tourist informations, national park centers, web links; Here, you should only add details that cannot be attributed to POI.

Starting point/trailhead and Point of arrival

This information should comply with the turn-by-turn directions. You need to be precise as you should be able to put the information into your mobile navigation device or click it if you use mobile applications (address if necessary).

Turn-by-turn directions

Detailed description of the route; Users should be capable of finding the way solely according to the turn-by-turn directions. To what extent certain details are necessary or not depends on the individual route. However, turn-by-turn directions shouldn't simply be a stringing together of place names, but rather lead from POI to POI. Thus, you should ideally use the automatically generated roadbook of the Outdooractive Platform.

Example: *We start our route at the parking lot south of the town and take a gravel path westwards for the first 200 m. We turn left after passing a small bridge (...).*

Internal Note

This entry isn't published. It is merely for internal comments or notes. It informs other editors about specific issues of a route. This also includes information about the release of images and other external content.

c. Details

Length, Duration, Altitude

The following formula helps to roughly calculate the time for hiking and cycling routes:

- **hiking:** hiking time = (elevation gain/400) + (distance in km/4)
- **cycling:** cycling time = (elevation gain/1200) + (distance in km/20)

The result shows the overall time in hours without stops. For urban walks you should add the time of visits to the walking time.

In the Outdooractive Content Manager, most data is generated automatically when the geometry is saved, such as the total length in kilometers, the cumulative elevation gain, the highest and lowest point and the duration (measured by the previously set activity). Except for the length of the route, all information can be adjusted manually. The cumulative elevation gain for loops needs to be the same in ascent and descent. The figures should be rounded.

Difficulty

The difficulty of a route is specified as *easy*, *medium* or *difficult*. It is calculated via the entered information of stamina and technique. For most activities, you can choose between the points one to six or award between one and six stars.

One or two points comply with an *easy* degree of difficulty, three and four points comply with a *medium* degree of difficulty whereas five and six points indicate a *difficult* route. Once either stamina or technique have been given a more difficult estimate than the other, the system automatically chooses the higher degree of difficulty.

Stamina

You can choose up to six stars in order to assess stamina. The following chart helps you to choose an appropriate rating:

1 star: The route is easy and even manageable without previous training. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is less than an hour.

2 stars: The route is easy and manageable without previous training. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is less than two hours.

3 stars: The route is slightly demanding. A basic physical condition is required. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is between two and four hours.

4 stars: The route is moderately difficult. A basic physical condition is required. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is between four and six hours.

5 stars: The route is demanding, a good physical condition is required. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is between six and eight hours.

6 stars: The route is very demanding, a very good physical condition is required. The duration (active duration, stops not included) is more than eight hours.

Technique and scales

For most activities, the technical difficulty is rated between one and six points:

1 point: The terrain of the route is easy and can be mastered by everyone without any specific training.

2 points: The terrain of the route is easy and can be mastered with relatively little experience.

3 points: The terrain of the route is diverse, but rarely difficult. Experience is helpful and worthwhile.

4 points: The terrain of the route is diverse and partly difficult. Terrain experience is required.

5 points: The terrain of the route is demanding and often difficult. Specific training and according experience are required.

6 points: The terrain of the route is demanding and difficult for most parts. Training is vital.

Note: The difficulty always complies with the route during optimal conditions. Wetness, ice, fog and wind can impede a route tremendously. For routes that combine several degrees of difficulty – always choose the most difficult one.

The above-mentioned chart doesn't refer to alpine activities and mountain bike routes. Outdooractive calls on internationally accepted assessment scales to classify the following activities.

Via ferratas

The Schall system ranging from A to F (with intermediate stages like C/D) is used to assess via ferratas.

Stage	Definition
A	rocky terrain or terrain riddled with rocks; occasional climbing aids (but rarely necessary); Sure-footedness, a good head for heights and climbing equipment for beginners are the main requirements.
B	steeper rocky terrain with exposed parts; climbing aids such as wire cables, chains, iron clamps and ladders; Sure-footedness, a good head for heights as well as a good physical condition and strong arms and legs are required; Climbing equipment is recommended.
C	step to very steep rocky terrain with many/long exposed parts; climbing aids such as wire cables, iron clamps, steps, long or overhanging ladders; Sure-footedness and a good head for heights as well as a good physical condition and strong arms and legs are required; A climbing set is necessary, beginners should bring a safety rope.
D	vertical, sometimes overhanging rock; mostly exposed; climbing aids can be wide apart; Sure-footedness and a good head for heights as well as a good physical condition and strong arms and legs are required; A climbing set is mandatory; unsuitable for beginners and children
E	vertical, often overhanging rock; consistently exposed; combined with slab climbing; Sure-footedness and a good head for heights, strong hands (fingers), arms and legs as well as a high degree of mobility are required; A climbing set is mandatory; rope team if necessary; not suitable for beginners and children

F	primarily overhanging rock; consistently exposed; combined with slab climbing; Sure-footedness and a good head for heights, strong hands (fingers), arms and legs as well as a high degree of mobility are required; A climbing set is mandatory; Top rope security is recommended; not suitable for children and beginners
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[Via ferrata scale after Kurt Schall]

Alpine Routes

Alpine Routes are assessed with the UIAA scale. It includes levels of difficulty from I to XII. An optional + or - signifies further intermediate steps.

Easy: I, I+, II-, II, II+
 Medium: III-, III, III+, IV-
 Difficult: IV, IV+, V-, V, V+, VI-, VI, VI+, VII-, VII, VII+, VIII-, VIII, VIII+, IX-, IX, IX+, X-, X, X+, XI-, XI, XI+, XII-, XII, XII+

The steepness of ice (see Ice Tours) can be selected in a drop-down menu.

Easy: <30°, 30°, 35°, 40°
 Medium: 45°, 50°, 55°, 60°
 Difficult: 65°, 70°, 75°, 80°, 85°, 90°, 95°, 100°, 100°+

The Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) has developed a different scale for high-alpine rock and ice routes, the so-called "Westalpenskala" [Western Alpine Scale] with grades between F ("facile" – easy) and ABO ("abominablement difficile" – extremely difficult) or the appropriate German label from L ("leicht" [easy]) to EX ("extrem").

Easy: F, PD-, PD, PD+
 Medium: AD-, AD, AD+, D-, D, D+
 Difficult: TD-, TD, TD+, ED-, ED, ED+, ABO

Alpine Climbing

Alpine Climbing routes are also rated with the UIAA scale, but with a different classification for easy, medium and difficult:

Easy: I, I+, II-, II, II+, III-, III, III+, IV-, IV, IV+
 Medium: V-, V, V+, VI-, VI, VI+
 Difficult: VII-, VII, VII+, VIII-, VIII, VIII+, IX-, IX, IX+, X-, X, X+, XI-, XI, XI+, XII-, XII, XII+

The French scale is another classification system for free climbing routes. The degrees range from 1 to 9b.

Easy: 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c
 Medium: 5a, 5a+, 5b, 5c, 5c+, 6a, 6a+
 Difficult: 6b, 6b+, 6c, 6c+, 7a, 7a+, 7b, 7b+, 7c, 7c+, 8a, 8a+, 8b, 8b+, 8c, 8c+, 9a, 9a+, 9b

Ice Climbing

For Ice Climbing routes, we either use the WI (water, ice) numeric scale,

Easy: WI1, WI2, WI3, WI3+
 Medium: WI4, WI4+, WI5
 Difficult: WI5+, WI6, WI6+, WI7, WI7+

or the m numeric scale (mixed):

Easy: M1, M2, M3, M3+, M4, M4+
 Medium: M5, M5+, M6, M6+, M7, M7+
 Difficult: M8, M8+, M9, M9+, M10, M10+, M11, M11+

Mountain Bike and Mountainbike Transalp

Mountain Bike routes, in addition to the classification between one and six, can be rated in the singletrack scale:

Stage	Definition
S0	flowy forest and meadow trails with grip; no steps, rocks or roots; gentle gradient and wide turns
S1	Expect smaller obstacles such as rocks and roots; ground partially not solidified; washed out gutters; gradient partially up to 40%; Basic biking techniques are required; Obstacles can be rolled over.
S2	many obstacles such as rocks, roots and steps; possibly narrow turns; gradient up to 70%; necessary basic techniques to handle the right dosage of breaking and weight shift to overcome obstacles

S3	blocked trails; switchbacks and steps; slippery terrain/debris; gradient partially over 70%; Very good biking skills, exact breaking and very good balance are necessary.
S4	very steep and largely blocked terrain; steep ramps, narrow switchbacks and steps; trail techniques such as displacing front or rear wheel as well as impeccable breaking technique; for extreme bikers only! Bike can scarcely be pushed/carried.
S5	blocked terrain and opposing climbs; debris and landslides; big obstacles such as tree trunks and high steps (as well as combinations); few run-off areas and braking distance; for extreme bikers only! Bike cannot be pushed/carried.

[Singletrack scale]

Experiential value

1 star: The route doesn't offer any interesting sights or resting opportunities and no touristic highlights. There are no refreshment stops.

2 stars: The route offers few interesting sightseeing opportunities and few touristic highlights. Refreshment stops are only available at the beginning and/or the end of the route.

3 stars: Alongside the route you have the chance to learn more about the landscape, region or history (museums, information boards or places to visit). There are resting points and refreshment stops along the way.

4 stars: The route offers more than one interesting sightseeing opportunity. Refreshment stops and resting points with nice views can be found along the way. There is a minimum of one touristic highlight (e.g. high ropes course, toboggan run or playground).

5 stars: The route offers plenty of attractive resting points and refreshment stops that are typical for the region. Special features of landscape, region and history are illustrated along the way. Several touristic highlights are part of the route.

6 stars: The route offers several attractive resting points and refreshment stops that are typical for the region. Special features of landscape, region and history are illustrated along the way. Many touristic highlights complete the experience of the route.

Landscape

1 star: The route leads through a rather dull landscape and almost exclusively through a built-up area. There are no natural highlights.

2 stars: The route frequently leads through built-up areas. The landscape isn't very diverse and offers little views worth seeing or natural highlights.

3 stars: The route leads through built-up areas, but offers a diverse landscape. Some parts even provide beautiful views and an intact animal and plant environment; historic buildings (castles, fortresses, mills, old estates) are part of the natural landscape.

4 stars: While the route partially leads through a built-up area, it nonetheless provides noteworthy natural highlights and beautiful views. Elements that are a blot to the landscape, such as mining and industrial areas or an accumulation of recreational facilities such as mountain railways, ski resorts and leisure facilities, are sparse.

5 stars: The route leads through a diverse natural landscape (e.g. forest, meadows, mountains, valleys, gorges, heath landscapes, coasts, rivers, lakes) and offers numerous highlights. Passages that are a blot to the landscape are reduced to a minimum.

6 stars: The route leads through a diverse natural landscape with a large recognition value. It offers beautiful views and a versatile animal and plant environment. The landscape also provides historic and architectural monuments without any blots to the landscape.

Displayed region

In the front end, every type of content is displayed with the region that it is located in. The assignment, automatically carried out by Outdooractive, corresponds to the geographical name of the region and guarantees the highest visibility of the content.

The displayed region of a route depends on the starting point. In some exceptions, the starting point might be located minimally outside the intended region. If so, you can manually adjust the name in the Content Manager to the next bigger region (drop-down menu) or you can hide it completely (check box).

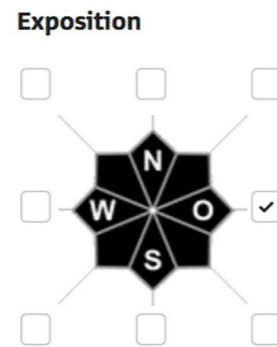
Status

The status informs you whether a route is open or closed. It should only be maintained if you can guarantee a regular update in the Content Manager. Nothing is worse than wrong information.

Exposition

The exposition describes the slope gradient on a mountain, climbing, alpine or winter route. The illustration visualizes the hillside exposition of the ascent.

Example: *If the hillside drops from west to east, the exposition is towards east.*



Risk potential

The numbers one to six refer to the risk potential of an alpine activity. It is determined by variables such as slope angle, orientation, risk of avalanches, key passages, crevasses, snow cornices and the length of a route. The variable with the highest hazard classification determines the level of risk potential.

Risk Potential 1:

- The route leads through flat and even terrain.
- The route course is straightforward.
- There is no risk of avalanches.
- The route has no key passages.
- There are no crevasses.
- There is no risk of collapsing snow cornices.

Risk Potential 2:

- The route mostly leads through flat and even terrain.
- The route course is easy to spot, no dangers along the way.
- little risk of avalanches
- The route has barely any key passages.
- on glaciers: almost no risk by crevasses
- almost no risk of collapsing snow cornices

Risk Potential 3:

- The route partially takes you through steep terrain with a slope angle of 30°.
- The route course isn't always easy to spot, almost no dangers on the way.
- risk of avalanches to some extent
- The route has a few key passages.
- on glaciers: moderate risk by crevasses
- There is risk of collapsing snow cornices to some extent.

Risk Potential 4:

- The route leads through steep terrain with a slope angle of up to 34°.
- The route isn't easy to spot, numerous dangers along the way.

- risk of avalanches
- The route has numerous key passages.
- on glaciers: high risk of crevasses
- high risk of collapsing snow cornices

Risk Potential 5:

- The route leads through steep terrain with a slope angle between 34° and 40°.
- The route course is difficult to spot, many dangers along the way.
- high risk of avalanches
- The route has many key passages.
- on glaciers: high risk of crevasses
- high risk of collapsing snow cornices

Risk Potential 6:

- The route leads through steep terrain with a slope angle of over 40°.
- The route course is difficult to spot, a lot of dangers along the way.
- very high risk of avalanches
- The route has a lot of key passages.
- on glaciers: very high risk of crevasses
- very high risk of collapsing snow cornices

Additional information for alpine activities

For the activities Via Ferrata, Alpine Climbing, Ice Climbing and Ice Tour, you can enter information such as "Approach", "Wall height", "Climbing length" and "Descent".

Via Ferratas include the possibility to inform about the "Creator/maintainer", the type of via ferrata (classic, sport, fun) and the condition of the safety cable.

Mountain Hikes and Alpine Climbing routes can display the classification of a terrain (exposed, secured passages, climbing passages, ridges, walls, slabs, sinter formations, overhanging, abseil passages, descent on foot, plaisir).

The steepness of the ice can be added for Alpine and Ice Tours. Alpine Climbing routes, Ice Climbing routes and Ice Tours can include information about their first ascent.

For the activities Alpine Route, Alpine Climbing, Ice Climbing and Ice Tour, you can include information about belay stations/intermediate belays, the rope length and the amount of quickdraws you should take.

Ski Tours, Snowshoe Tours, Backcountry Skiing routes and Long Distance Ski Tours provide the chance to include information about the terrain (forest paths, clear area, forest) and the DAV (German Alpine Club) initiative *Natürlich auf Tour* [naturally on tour].

Ski Tours and Long Distance Ski Tours can be marked as “High-altitude Ski Tours” and as “Suitable for snowboards”. For Ice Climbing, the WI and Mixed rating system further inform about the difficulty of a route.

Recommended season

- If the highest point of a route lies above 1000 m, it is usually not accessible from November to April.
- If the highest point lies between 500 m and 1000 m, it is usually recommendable between April and November.
- If the highest point of a route lies below 500 m, it is usually accessible all year round.
- Cycling routes are usually recommendable from April to November – even if below 500 m.

Characteristics and seals of quality

- A route is always either “in and out” OR “loop”.
- “In and outs” take you from point A to point B. Even if the starting and end point are identical, the route is automatically categorized as “in and out” in case the return trip is identical with the outward trail.
- For loops, the starting and end point are identical. The route itself isn’t – at least not for very long. If there is a joint route, you need to decide which classification better describes the character of the route.
- A route is only a *multistage tour* if it consists of an overall route and several stages.
- Only short routes with little elevation gain are *family friendly*. Family routes need to provide experiences for kids, but don’t necessarily have to be suitable for strollers.
- Seals of quality are official distinctions awarded by institutes and organizations.
- You can apply different filters in the front end: e.g. *loop*, *multistage tour*, *refreshment stops*, *scenic*, *family friendly*, *handicapped accessible*

Literature and Maps

These boxes can optionally be filled with information about books, brochures or maps. If possible, you should include author, title, publisher and ISBN. Ideally, literature information is automatically generated due to books and maps of publishers that are saved in the Outdooractive System.

d. Stages

Trips that last several days can be displayed as “Multistage tours” on *outdooractive.com*. It is necessary to create every part of a route (stage) individually as well as an additional route that describes the entire course. Thus, there are six IDs for a five-day hike.

When linking all individual stages, the route has to be identical with the course of the overall route. Moreover, a succeeding stage should always start where the previous stage ends.

If these requirements are met, the Outdooractive Team connects the individual routes with the overall route.

e. Linked POI

“Linked POI” is one of the most important tabs for creating routes in the Outdooractive Content Manager. There you decide which POI should be displayed with a route.

Initially, the map shows all POI that are available in the Outdooractive Platform – regardless if they are published or not. Grey points aren’t linked to a route, colored points are. You can find useful filter options on top of the map.

When linking POI, you can tick four boxes:

- **Web:** The POI is displayed in the “Turn-by-turn directions” tab and as a waypoint on the map. The POI is also listed on the exported PDF file.
- **Print:** These points can be exported to Outdooractive Print Products (mini maps, overview maps, flyers, brochures etc.).
- **Tip:** Marks the POI with a “best deal” pennant.
- **Stop for snacks and drinks:** Marks a POI as refreshment stop listed in the “Details” tab.

If you want to link a POI that doesn’t exist, the input mask provides the opportunity to create a new one. To do that you need to click “Create new POI” and mark its location on the map. Please make sure that the point is located as precisely as possible. The satellite image makes it easier to choose the exact location.

A newly created POI isn’t immediately published. To make sure that the POI is displayed with the route, it needs to be fully maintained and its status updated as “published”.

Further information on the maintenance of POI in chapter VII. 2.

Once a POI is linked to the route, the media of the POI are automatically imported into the route’s media browser and can be integrated into the gallery by ticking the relevant box.

You need to be aware that this method distributes uploaded images rapidly throughout the platform. Thus, it is important that you only use material if the copyright is clear.³¹

f. Creating routes in the Business App

The Outdooractive Business App makes it possible to record and edit your own routes.

The map view is initially aligned north. The compass function displays the discrepancy between your viewing direction and the North Pole in degrees. On the bottom right you can switch between different basic maps and show the trail network if necessary.

You can save maps and content offline in the Business App. The feature “My Map” allows the fade-in of content on the map in addition to the current location. Thus, you can orientate yourself without any internet connection and navigate a previously downloaded route.

If you click “Record”, the app starts the recording of the route. For this, an internet connection isn’t necessary. The track recording can be paused, continued and stopped at any time. App and web version are automatically synchronized as soon as the device is connected to the Internet. This enables the editing of a recorded route on your desktop.

Next to recording tracks, the Business App provides the possibility to enter and edit all other route information. Photos that have been taken with the app are available on the device and the Content Manager. They carry a georeference with the help of which images are displayed where they were created.

You can also maintain current conditions with the Outdooractive Business App.

2. Points

Points, also known as waypoints or POI, are just as important to the Outdooractive Platform as routes – together they set the basis of the platform. A new POI can either be created under the “Points” tab or while creating a route in the “Linked POI” tab.³² Depending on the type of POI³³ different input masks appear.

a. Title, Summary, Description

The “Description” tab provides the chance to maintain the type of POI, edit the description and enter information about address and fees.

³¹ Cf. chapter IV. 4. on image rights.

³² Cf. chapter VII. 1. e. on linked POI.

³³ Cf. chapter V. 2. a. on POI categories.

The title includes the precise name of the POI. For undifferentiated names, you should include the name of the place, e.g. *Grand Canyon Visitor Center*. Ideally, the title shouldn’t be longer than 65 characters.

The summary provides a first impression of the POI by stating the most important keywords. It shouldn’t be longer than 180 characters. This text is displayed in bold letters in the front end.

Next, you can edit the description of the POI with information specific to the category. Please be aware that the text needs to be readable on mobile devices and thus shouldn’t be longer than 1000 characters.

Some input boxes are only to be considered for specific POI categories. Obviously a mountain summit doesn’t have an entrance fee or a phone number. But you should generally fill in every input box the best possible way.

b. Opening hours

The opening hours can be managed on a daily basis (from Monday to Sunday) in the Outdooractive Content Manager. For each day, several time periods can be entered.

In addition to the regular opening hours, you can also maintain special opening hours. If, for example, a company is dependent on public holidays, these can be adjusted individually. A free text field is also available.

c. Location

Just like routes, POI require a geographical reference. However, they aren’t visualized as tracks, but as single dots on the map.

Once you have filled in the address box in full in the “Description” tab, the geocoding automatically suggests a location. The point can also be adjusted on the map or corrected by georeferencing the address.

This can either be done via the address search box or by manual zooming and a click on the map. The resulting point can be subsequently moved via drag&drop.

3. Events and Offers

Events and Offers are part of the nondurable content on the platform. They are displayed for a previously defined period of time and – once this period has expired – automatically

set to status "rejected". For recurring events (e.g. annual events) you simply need to update the date and the content can be reused.

Events and offers are features that are only available on *outdooractive.com*, in the Outdooractive Regio+ (web and app) and Outdooractive Destination (web and app) product lines. Nevertheless, every Business user can create offers. They will be displayed in the Outdooractive Content Marketing Network.

a. Events

Events can be divided into different categories. To publish an event, you need to determine a georeference and a date/time. Doing so, you need to distinguish between a one-time event and an event that occurs repeatedly. The different options are listed below:

Individual events without repetition: For individual events you need to enter the start (date and time) as well as the end. Choose "none" in the drop-down menu "Repetition" and save the event.

Start
required

End
End of (first) date

Repetition

[To overview](#) [Add to list](#)

[Entering a one-time event]

Event with regular repetitions (weekly, every two/four weeks): As soon as a repeating event is created, you need to enter start and end of a *single* event first. You can choose the temporal intervals the event is repeated in the according drop-down menu. It opens another input box where you enter the *final* end of the entire event. This approach is mandatory as otherwise the content won't be displayed correctly.

Start
required

End
End of (first) date

Repetition

Ends at (required)

[To overview](#) [Add to list](#) [Preview](#) [Save](#)

[Entering an event with regular repetition]

Event with individual repetition: This option provides the possibility to create individually recurring events. Again, you need to enter the start and end of a *single* event first. After opting for "custom", additional boxes appear. This enables the editing of the event days.

Start
required

End
End of (first) date

Repetition

Regularity

Ends at (required)

Days

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

[Entering an event with individual repetition]

The "Description" tab offers further input boxes for links to the event website, advanced registration and ticketing. If the event requires special conditions of participation, they can be entered in the "Registration and pre-sale info" tab.

You can link an event with a different type of content such as routes or POI in the “Related Content” tab. While you can create an event within a route, you cannot link an existing one to it.

Every event can be linked to various sub-events that were created as separate events previously. This may be necessary if you want to display, for example, a festival and single concerts. Events and sub-events are – if they are linked in the Content Manager – automatically displayed together.

b. Offers

An offer is always based on an offerer who is responsible for the booking process. If you don't have the right to create offers, you can hire the Content Services Team to create them for you.

You can specify contact and booking links in the “Description” tab. They are visualized in the front end by colored buttons that guide users directly to the booking page of the partner.

4. Lists

Lists are collections of different content types. They serve to correlate existing content and to distribute it throughout the platform or via social-media channels.

A list consists of at least one item. A high-resolution image and a short description (max. 800 characters) complete the list. Lists are located on *outdooractive.com* in the menu item “Inspiration”. Platform-wide, lists can be managed as separate content types and can be displayed, embedded and shared everywhere.

The “Clipboard” is a specific type of list. There you can collect content that you either want to edit or look at again. The clipboard is also visible in the front end – where it serves as an overview of routes that you are considering for a trip. The categories “Already done” and “Want to go” provide an even better overview. You can move content from the clipboard to your own lists.

The feature “My Map” serves as a planning aid for lists if they are displayed on the map. “My Map” automatically synchronizes the content in web and app.

5. Current conditions, notices and closures

Current conditions, notices and closures provide important information – for example, the condition of cycle paths and hiking trails. They also announce closed areas, dangers or obstacles. Current conditions, notices and closures can be activated as an additional layer on all map displays on *outdooractive.com*.

Regular and high-quality entries on current route conditions help many athletes with their route planning. The more data is stored, the more helpful the tool.

When editing current conditions, please make sure to include the georeference into the title (mountain summit, route etc.). This also has to be guaranteed if connecting a current condition to existing content (see next chapter).

Example: *Fallen trees on the Angels Landing Trail, Zion National Park*

With the Outdooractive App creating current conditions is rather easy and fast. Images speak louder than words – which is why photographs can be very helpful for evaluating the current conditions. Images and videos that have been taken during a tour, can be immediately added to the respective entry.

a. Creating current conditions

Every employee, partner and every member of the Outdooractive Community can update and publish current conditions. There are two possibilities of entering current conditions:

1. connected to content

You can add current conditions to routes, POI and ski resorts in the Content Manager – you can find the respective button in the top bar of the “Description” tab.

In the front end, current conditions can only be created for routes. You will find the respective function in the commentary section. If you want to edit or delete existing conditions, follow the entry via “My Page” > “My Content”.

2. independent of other content

You can also create current conditions independently of existing content and locate it directly on the map. In addition to the date, you then select the activity for which the condition applies. Only with this selection, search filters can work correctly. Thus, it should be added. To assign an already existing condition to a tour, select “Related content” in the detailed view of the condition and enter the tour ID there.

The default visual display of the front ends is set for 14 days. Afterwards, the current conditions are hidden as "currently not accurate", but not deleted to ensure that they can still be found via the time and search filter.

b. Creating notices and closures

Notices and closures are maintained by Outdooractive or by touristic partners. In addition to points, it is also possible to select entire areas or route courses for the information. Large area closures can thus be covered without having to create multiple conditions.

Notices and closures are assigned a validity date in the Content Manager and shown within the specified period. Unlike current conditions, there is no automatic mechanism for hiding the entry after a certain time has elapsed.

6. General information on content

a. Getting there

Public transport

The description explains the arrival by public transport and includes, if possible, the name of the next bus/train station nearby. Another option is to state the bus line. However, you shouldn't add departure times as they tend to change relatively quickly. You can only check the public-transport-friendly box if the following criteria are met:

- frequent public-transport connection
- convenient connection for long-distance travelers
- from the final destination to the starting point of the route in less than 15 minutes
- Detailed travel information for public transport is provided.

Getting there

Short travel description that is oriented to the route's nearest freeway via car.

Example: *Coming from Livingston on the North Entrance Road (89) driving southbound, turn on Norris Canyon Road and continue eastbound. Then switch to Grand Loop Road and later on South Rim Drive to the car park at Uncle Tom's Trail / South Rim Trail.*

Parking

Please state a legal parking possibility for cars that is nearest to the starting point of the route. You should also provide information on whether the parking lot is free of charge or not and how many parking spaces there are approximately. If the surroundings are a bit more complicated, give tips such as: *"Ask the farmer for permission"*.

b. External relations

When editing routes and POI, you can enter so-called "External relations" in the Content Manager. Those link for example to booking systems or tourist cards.

For POI it is also possible to enter additional links. The field "Website" in the tab "Description" can only contain one entry – in many cases, it can be useful, however, to display more than one URL.

Concerning routes, the links inserted via "External relations" have no effect in the front end. That's because the "Description" tab already offers the field "Tips, hints and links", where additional information can be entered.

c. Export

Every type of content has an "Export" tab in the Content Manager. There you can download information as PDF files. If the content you want to download is a route, you can also use the GPX or KML format and export the elevation profile as SVG data.

Not all scales are available for the PDF printout of extra long routes. The transferring of a 300 km long route to a map in 1:25 000, for example, is a very complex process.

Note: The map that is created via the "Export"-function, isn't suitable for print products for the resolution is only 200 dpi. Furthermore, the terms and conditions of the Outdooractive GmbH don't allow any publication of map exports.

d. Status

The status characterizes the content's workflow state. You can choose between the following settings:

- incomplete
- completed
- rejected

- approved
- published
- deleted
- new

Every new content automatically is set as “new”. To be displayed in the front end, you need to set the status to “published”. Before, you can check your entry with the preview function.

The status “completed” is used by authors and editors (user roles) who aren’t allowed to publish content themselves. If several instances are involved in publishing content, the status “approved” serves as an intermediate step. For mistakes and/or requests for revisions the status is set to “rejected”.

If you set a content to “deleted”, it isn’t immediately erased. It is only marked as deleted and can be removed in a second step. For this purpose, you need to click the three points located at the bottom right corner of the content in the overview menu and select “Remove”.

e. Comments and conditions

As soon as an entry is rated/commented or if platform users update current conditions, the author is notified per mail (provided he/she saved a name and an email address in the system and did not deactivate messages in the profile settings). Moreover, the entry is displayed in the menu item “Comments and conditions”.

There you can also find images and videos that users uploaded to your content. They are also available in the “Media” tab, but only visible in the gallery if the author of the content ticks the corresponding box.

Note: The comments to an entry might include relevant notifications – e.g. about wrong directions or closed refreshment stops. To ensure that content is up-to-date, it is necessary to keep an eye on the comments and respond to them.

Information about current conditions in chapter VII. 5.

f. Statistics and the Content Reach Report

The *outdooractive.com* front end as well as particular back end tabs provide a statistic. It is based on a detailed Content Reach Report (CRR) which is available in Outdooractive Business.

The CRR is divided into five components by which the reach of content and the users’ activities can be measured:

- teasers (teasers in lists and search results, recommendations on content detail pages etc.)
- page views (clicks on content detail pages)
- actions (clicks on map and media gallery, comments, ratings or conditions, add images/videos, recommend/like, clipboard etc.)
- downloads (PDF, GPX, KML, offline storage etc.)
- Outdooractive Rank (see next chapter)

g. Rank

Huge parts of the content on the platform are attributed with a rank. The rank is a quality indicator that estimates how relevant and informative content is within the platform.

An algorithm assists in evaluating content. It determines a number between 0 and 100 by means of different technically analyzable factors (amount of images, text length etc.). From 65 points onwards, a route is classified as a TOP Route and is displayed as such in the front end.

The users have the deciding vote as they strongly influence the rank with their engagement.

Content with a high rank is displayed prominently on the platform, obtains more visibility and a higher reach. The search results are arranged according to their rank to ensure that good content is placed at the top.

If you want to actively take care of a good ranking of all your content, you can use the sorting function in Outdooractive Content Manager to identify content that has not yet been optimally maintained. To do this, select the desired content type under “Contents” and then set the filter to “Sort by” and “Outdooractive Rank”.

h. Translations

Content of the Outdooractive Platform can be translated into a number of different languages. Currently, Outdooractive Business provides the following language options:

German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Dutch, Czech, Slovenian, Slovak, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Bosnian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Turkish, Hebrew

Translations in Outdooractive Business

There are two possibilities to enter foreign-language versions:

1. You set the entire system to the required language. The according selection field is in the drop-down menu in the upper right corner. Then, the navigation is also displayed in the respective language. Individual text boxes in the Content Manager can be filled one after another – regardless of any other language. This method is particularly suitable for creating new foreign-language content.
2. You can also keep the set-up system language and translate individual text boxes separately. You can find the corresponding input mask if you click the translation symbol that is situated next to every input box. Choose the required language in the drop-down menu and enter the translation analog to the original. This method is particularly suitable if content already exists in one language and needs to be translated.

Translations in the front end

The front end of *outdooractive.com* is currently available in German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese and Hebrew. The language can be adjusted at the bottom of the page.

Outdooractive.com/de mainly shows German texts whereas *outdooractive.com/en* mostly consists of English content etc. If one language isn't (entirely) maintained, the text is displayed in the default language that is set for the respective page. In the front end, a *Google-Translate* button shows and you can translate the texts manually.

The front ends of customer projects for web and app are generally available in all languages that the system supports. Each customer decides what content is to be displayed and translates it independently. The customer also chooses which languages to provide. These settings are handled by the Outdooractive Professional Services Team.

Concerning product maturity, Outdooractive only provides portals in German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Romanian, Chinese and Hebrew. Portals in other languages are translated according to the level of development at the time of the launch but aren't continuously edited by Outdooractive.

Default language

As soon as content is maintained in more than one language, an overview of the entered languages appears in the "Status" tab. The default language is always set to the language in which a content has originally been created. The default language can be changed via

the drop-down menu. It should always comply with the main language of the content – the language in which content is maintained best and first.

Status of content translations

Red and green dots in the "Status" tab inform about the status of a translation. For this, the system takes into consideration how many text boxes are filled in the default language.

Example: *The default language of a route is set to German. The title, the summary and the description are edited in German language. Only if the exact same text boxes are filled in other languages, the respective language versions are marked with a green dot.*

Red and green dots at the individual description fields show which contents of the default language have to be translated.

Only translated content is displayed in foreign-language *Regio* products. Text boxes that haven't been translated yet are compensated with a *Google-Translate* button.

Influence of translations on the rank

The default language is of great importance for the rank of multilingually maintained content. The default language of content should always comply with the entered main language. Only then the rank can be oriented towards the description in said language.

Examples:

- a) *The text boxes of a route are maintained in German, the default language is set to German. > The rank is based on the quality of the German description and accordingly high if all boxes are filled in. The translation of a foreign language results in additional points for the rank.*
- b) *The text boxes of a route are maintained in English, the default language is set to German. > The rank is based on the quality of the German description – if it is not or not completely available, the rank is low, even if all English text boxes are filled in.*

Closing words

We hope that this Content Guideline contributes to the understanding of modern content marketing and shows specific ways of how content creation in tourism can work.

In order to master the challenges of the digital age, Outdooractive is convinced that the only viable option is to have a common content database.

We appreciate your feedback as well as suggestions for corrections and additions. We are happy to include them into our guide. Our goal is to make this guideline a useful tool for all content creators in the tourism and leisure industry.

Your Outdooractive Team

outdooractive



corp.outdooractive.com