1. **The PGST03 2014-2015 workshop**

   The workshop was designed to consider existing literature, visit a chosen area assisted by local experts, evaluate the digital resources in existence, share discussions, and deliver a final report. The chosen area was the Valle Camonica, a mountain sub-region of Northern Italy which is currently in the process of building its own Destination Management Organization (DMO) under La Valle dei Segni project.

   It appears that – thanks also to the assistance of the local Cooperativa Voilà, which we warmly thank for their cooperation – the workshop’s tasks have been completed. A presentation of the results was held at the Università di Bergamo on December 17, 2014. The relevant Prezi document, developed by Svetlana Repina, is available at the university website under the page of the IT for Tourism Managers course. Participants included students from five nationalities. The workshop’s proceedings have been fully taped, and are providing material for a university research by Chiara Mafessoni on the usage of English as a Lingua Franca.

2. **Valle Camonica**

   Valle Camonica, or Valcamonica, is one of the largest sub-regions of the Central Alps, in eastern Lombardy (Italian, Lombardia). It has an area of 1,335 km², and approximately 118,000 inhabitants.¹

   Starting from the Tonale Pass (across the Rhaetian Alps, at the divide with Val di Sole, part of the Trentino) down to Pisogne (near Lake Iseo), the valley is crossed North-South throughout its full length by the river Oglio. The valley is included in the administrative territory of the Province of Brescia, and can be divided and identified in three main sub areas: the Upper, Medium and Lower Valle Camonica. The three areas have different landscapes and different features, according to their climates and geographical positions.


2.1 Upper Valle Camonica
The Upper Valle Camonica has an East-West orientation. It starts around the village of Ponte di Legno and descends to the area of Val di Corteno. The climate is typical of the high region, with cold winter and moderate temperatures in summer. This area is famous for the mountain group of the Adamello, an important tourist destination in winter as well in summer. The peak is the Adamello itself, with an elevation of 3,539 metres (11,611 ft) – an important goal for lots of mountaineers and amateurs.

2.2 Middle Valle Camonica
The Middle Valle Camonica extends from Edolo to Breno. Due to its position, the climate is not so cold, but the summers are temperate. Thanks to the proximity to the upper valley, there are lots of tourist villages ready to meet and greet a big number of tourists with accommodation, cultural and traditional activities.

2.3 Lower Valle Camonica
The Lower Valle Camonica extends from Bienno to Lake Iseo. Here winters are not so cold, but summers are hot with lots of rain. It is a very important area from the point of view of tourist activities and sports, but also of cultural tourism. The area is the world of summer sports like climbing and biking, as well as in winter thanks to important ski resorts like Montecampione.

2.4 A bit of history
Valle Camonica became inhabited relatively late; around 15,000 years ago, after the last Ice Age. The first inhabitants arrived in the valley in Epipalaeolithic times. In the area we can admire a big number of prehistoric rock engravings: they are an important side of the valley’s attractions, and every Camuno – as the locals call themselves in Italian – is proud of this heritage.

In the Middle Ages the valley was under the control of the Visconti Dukes from Milan, and later a part of the Venetian mainland. During World War I, battle lines stretched along the east border of Valle Camonica across the Adamello Group.

2.5 Tourism data
During the last two years (2012-2013), the average stay in Valle Camonica decreased by about 4%, with 711,062 people spending at least two days: this was the worst situation in the last nine years (2005: 701,000). The number of Italians decreased by 7%, the number of foreigners increased by 3.5%. The number of arrivals decreased by 1.8%: 163,988 people. A better situation is found in the Adamello ski area, that represents the biggest source of mountain tourism in the province of Brescia. 50% of the arrivals were from Italy, 40% from the Czech Republic and Poland, 5% from England, and 5% from Germany. In the Middle Valle Camonica, visitors to the engravings parks in 2013 were 58,950, coming mainly in May, April and August (see Table 1). Compared with 2012, the number of visitors decreased in almost all the parks: by 7.8% for the Naquane Park, by 1.1% for the Massi Park, and by 2.5% for the Seradina Park; the number, however, has increased by 22.3% in the Foppe area. Three types of visitors appear to be dominant: school groups, tourist groups, and individual or family tourists from abroad. 9.4% of visitors were foreigners: from England (around 30%), Germany (40%), France (15%) and the Netherlands (15%).

In the Lower Valle Camonica, the most important type of tourism is spa tourism in the towns of Darfo Boario Terme and Angolo Terme. The majority of tourists here are elderly people, that stay for a long time. During the last years, arrivals decreased largely.

---

2 See http://www.vallecamonicacultura.it/convegno/pdf/MarcoTottoli.pdf, and http://www.unionealtavallemeconica.bs.it/Allegati/all_32578_02_PARTE%201.pdf
3 See http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/Allegati/all_23155_00_A-Documento%20strategico.pdf
4 Ibidem
2.6 Transport
Due to the location of the Valle Camonica and its infrastructures, the valley is relatively well accessible from the airports of Milano, Bergamo and Verona, and from the Milano-Venezia motorway. A railway connects Brescia to Edolo, and buses from Bergamo take to several towns and villages in Valle Camonica. Once you reach the valley, however, the best way to visit it is to move by car. In fact, local tourist organizations are improving car rental service, making it more convenient and accessible. (A list of car rental services has been made available on the main official tourism website.) Cycling may provide an alternative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Foppe</th>
<th>Naquane</th>
<th>Massi Seradina</th>
<th>TOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4.602</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>1.038</td>
<td>10.609</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>12.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>11.190</td>
<td>1.103</td>
<td>14.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>2.607</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>5.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUG</td>
<td>1.038</td>
<td>10.609</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>5.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGO</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>9.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>3.716</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>9.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2.601</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>4.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>4.032</td>
<td>4.424</td>
<td>5.306</td>
<td>58.950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Visitors to the main Valle Camonica rock engravings parks, 2013. Source: cmvallecamonica.bs.it

2.7 World Heritage
The valley is known worldwide for its outstanding wealth and variety of engraved rock art. In fact, in 1979 Valle Camonica was the first Italian site to be included in the Unesco’s World Heritage List. There are eight archaeological parks here, and more are bound to come, thanks to local institutions that are developing and preserving this heritage. Awareness spreads, that engraved rock art may contribute to improve social as well as economical conditions. The National Prehistory Museum of Valle Camonica, in Capo di Ponte, represents the core of the valley’s identity. This museum offers to the visitors a great opportunity to explore the daily life of ancient people: where they lived, where they prayed, worked, or buried their dead.

2.8 More heritage
It’s not only about prehistoric times, however. The heritage of Valle Camonica also includes a rich variety of well-preserved historic sites, like the ruins of the amphitheater in Cividate Camuno and the remains of Minerva’s shrine near Breno from Roman times, a number of castles from the Middle Ages, and the historic centers of several towns and villages, which still follow medieval patterns and provide welcoming ambiances.

Many religious buildings also stand out, both for their architectural worth and for the works of art they display: the San Salvatore monastery and the San Siro parish church in Capo di Ponte, dating to the 11th century, may be appropriately mentioned.

2.9 Activities
Beyond heritage, tourism in Valle Camonica has a strong mountain component: both white tourism – down ski slopes in winter – and active summer tourism in regional nature parks. A number of walking itineraries are available, from the easiest to the most engaging, plus many locations for mountaineering, ski and ski mountaineering, as well as golf clubs, horse riding stables, and a hang gliding club.

Specifically interesting is cycling. Eleven routes have been carefully developed, and include the celebrated Ciclovia del Fiume Oglio (Bike Path of the River Oglio), connecting all the villages of the Valle Camonica from the Tonale Pass down to Lake Iseo, then south to the Franciacorta and the river Po.

The valley has a high potential for cultural, gastronomic and wellness tourism. Often tourism in the area refers to the Franciacorta to the South, which provides gluttons with top opportunities. It is also worth underlying that Lake Iseo and Lake Endine, along with alpine lakes and rivers, may be effective attractions. Finally, the towns of Angolo Terme and Darfo Boario Terme provide excellent spa opportunities, with eight wellness centers.

2.10 Considerations on the Valle Camonica tourism perspectives
Valle Camonica is undeniably attractive, and tourism can certainly become a main pillar of the local economy. The richness of the area can’t be underestimated: tourists of every age and interest may well find here their beloved activities. A diversified offer, the range of available products, good educational facilities: all these mean potentials to attract tourism. Yet – like for most places off the beaten tracks – these qualities are not obvious. Although preconditions seem to favor tourism development, Valle Camonica still reveals unsatisfactory industry indicators. Apparently, the image of the valley needs to be enhanced. Choosing one specific product, rather than promoting a bit of everything, could perhaps be beneficial in the perspective of tourism development.
La Valle dei Segni Project

La Valle dei Segni is a project currently held by Co.Or.Tur. – a round table for the promotion of the tourism offer of Valle Camonica – and the Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica, an administrative union of 41 city councils of the valley, which is based in Breno and is responsible for managing the Parco dell’Adamello regional nature park.

3.1 La Valle dei Segni – Who

Members of Co.Or.Tur. are the main tourism actors operating in the valley, They include Adamello Ski (a consortium managing the Adamello ski area), Bresciatourism (a non-profit company promoting tourism in Brescia and its province), Terme di Boario (a company running the spas at Darfo Boario Terme), Provincia di Brescia Assessorato al Turismo (the relevant public administration for the province of Brescia), Parco dell’Adamello, GAL Vallecamonica Val di Scalve (a public-private partnership, “Gruppo di Azione Locale” or Local Action Group, across the valley itself and the Val di Scalve in the province of Bergamo), CTS (Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile), Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica, and Distretto Culturale di Valle Camonica (a system carried out on the territory in order to develop the local heritage and, through that, promote development).

3.2 La Valle dei Segni – What

The aim of the project is to promote Valle Camonica as a unique destination – beyond the differences and potential conflicts among the Upper, the Middle and the Lower sub areas – by focusing on its heritage, through the creation of a Destination Management Organization to be tested in 2015, and become fully operational in 2016 and 2017.

The main tasks of the DMO may be summarized as follows. Coordinate the tourism offer, take the role of aggregator to increase tourist flows, be the only interlocutor towards the specialized trade, and sell a tourist product that provides an experience and arouse emotions.

3.3 La Valle dei Segni – How

Communication strategies are crucial in the process of tourism development of a territory. The Distretto Culturale di Valle Camonica has therefore promoted the creation of a new logo and a new name – La Valle dei Segni – to represent the identity of the valley: a recognizable brand, meant to allow the Camuno territory to connotate its tourism offer for the Italian and foreign markets.

The logo denotes the character of a rocky valley, which was able to turn this stone into houses, tools and art. The stones engraved centuries ago by the Camuni are works of art, and art is a universal language.

The Distretto Culturale has recently shown that culture can be the economic driver of the area. This is why the new logo was chosen: the simplicity of an engraved stone evokes the signs that characterize a unique territory.

3.4 La Valle dei Segni – Marketing actions

In order to promote the project, Co.Or.Tur. wants to act in different fields. The Web will be the main mean of communication. Starting from January 2015, the official website will offer online booking and will gather together all the tourist offers. Online marketing with focus on the social channel and blogs is expected to start at the same time.

On the other hand, Co.Or.Tur. already printed brochures and materials in several languages, in order to promote the destination also within the territory.

3.5 La Valle dei Segni – Budget

Apparently, the project’s budget hasn’t been defined yet. The idea, however, seems to be investing some 250,000 €.

---

5 The PGST03 2014-2015 workshop was hosted by the Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica in Breno on November 29, 2014, was constantly assisted by Elisa Martinelli and Marina Pezzoni from the local Cooperativa Voilà, and kept in connection with La Valle dei Segni leading consultants Maria Grazia Mattei and Paolo Labichino. The information provided in this section 3 of the report largely comes from these sources directly.

6 Several Italian Regions have established Distretti Culturali. In Lombardy they are financed through a partnership between Fondazione Cariplo (a bank foundation) and Regione Lombardia (the regional government). The Distretti were carried out in four stages: the first three, from 2005 to 2010, included the design and selection of different proposals; the last stage is seeing the actual fulfilments. The Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica was the first to start in March 2009, to be followed by five others in Lombardy. It was planned by the Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica, which is still the main manager of the project. Cooperation among local communities is nonetheless essential: the stakeholders include – but are not limited to – municipalities, the BIM Consortium, the Province of Brescia, the Chamber of Commerce of Brescia, the local Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici (the authority for archaeological sites), cultural associations, private managers, and citizens.

7 It may be relevant to note that the Italian word segno has a different semantic field from the English sign. An official English translation of the new name doesn’t seem to have been agreed yet – even less normalized.
3.6 La Valle dei Segni – Offer
Expo 2015 is a great opportunity to exploit. It can allow the Valle Camonica to improve its popularity, and increase tourists flows. Looking forward Expo 2015, five *Club di Prodotto* or Product Clubs were proposed, in order to promote Valle Camonica as a tourism destination.

The chosen themes are
- Outdoor (Ski and Bike)
- Nature and Park
- Rural
- Family
- Community.

The idea of Co.or.Tur is to sell theme packages according to the Product Clubs segmentation through Explora, the official travel agency of Expo 2015.

3.7 La Valle dei Segni – Governance
At the beginning of 2015 a *concorso pubblico* (open competition) is scheduled, in order to nominate new functions that will lead the project for the next three years. These functions include a general coordinator manager, a technical administrator, and an operator which will promote and sell La Valle dei Segni.

3.8 Considerations on La Valle dei Segni project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All parties are involved in the project</th>
<th>Not enough funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The primary idea of the project is good</td>
<td>The potential of the idea is not exploited in the best way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The web presence is not developed enough, real potential of the web 2.0 is not used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: La Valle dei Segni pros and cons in brief

3.9 A SWOT analysis of La Valle dei Segni project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand image built on the UNESCO heritage — uniqueness</td>
<td>Not enough funds to promote in a proper way the valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation among the main actors of the territory</td>
<td>Weak web identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of all the ‘segni’ of the valley (not just the incision rivestis)</td>
<td>Conflicts between the local actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of road signs –– mantle of the territorial identity – tourist identity of the place</td>
<td>Absence of a common identity between actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absence of trust and motivation from local small businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New project – brand identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Popularity have to be improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of strong management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allocation in financial resources not in a best way (brochure in arabic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An open competition to improve the territory governance</td>
<td>Risk to attract only one-day visitors and not tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus the target and develop a strategy according to it</td>
<td>Risk not to develop a strong identity without developing a strong marketing campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More targeted marketing campaign</td>
<td>Risk not to receive support from the local businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the social network to provide visibility to DMO in a cheap and effective way</td>
<td>*3 year project — after this period the project should be kept under control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Word of mouth”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on repeaters and long stay tourists (German, Austrian, Dutch, Luxembourgers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Quick SWOT analysis of La Valle dei Segni

---

3.10 A basic web survey on Valle Camonica and tourism
Moreover, a basic survey based on the Qualtrics platform was prepared, and shared through personal connections. The questionnaire addresses locals, and includes ten questions in Italian. The questions are aimed to check the popularity of Valle Camonica, realize if it’s perceived as a proper tourism destination, and verify what locals know about the valley’s web presence. At the moment of delivering this report, only 44 responses were collected. Taking into account that this is definitely not enough to draw conclusions from any statistical points of view, the results of the survey were considered provisional, and are not presented here.

4. The web presence of Valle Camonica tourism

4.1 Web visibility of Valle Camonica as a destination
To start an analysis of the web presence of Valle Camonica, in November 2014 the following basic procedure was adopted. Some keywords were colloquially identified, both in Italian and English (Table 4 and Table 5), to search the Web. Google, Yahoo and Bing were tested – both the Italian and the global editions – considering the first result page for each of these search engines. The most recurring websites found through this procedure were the following:
- http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/
- http://www invallecamonica.it/
- http://www.vallecamonicaunesco.it/
- http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/
- http://www.vallecamonicacultura.it/
(The attention was concentrated on the first of the above websites, as it’s the official one for Valle Camonica.) Then, rankings of these websites in the three search engines according to the identified keywords were compared. The collected data are summarized in Table 4 and Table 5, referring respectively to Italian and global keywords.

![Table 4: Italian keywords and ranking of the Valle Camonica websites' visibility, November 2014](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Ranking Google</th>
<th>Ranking Yahoo</th>
<th>Ranking Bing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valle Camonica</td>
<td>Google 4, Yahoo 3, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 1</td>
<td>Google 1, Yahoo 2, Bing 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turismo Valle Camonica</td>
<td>Google 6, Yahoo 2, Bing 1</td>
<td>Google 4, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inscritti rupestri Italia</td>
<td>Google 1, Yahoo 2, Bing 1</td>
<td>Google 2, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scinter Valle Camonica</td>
<td>Google 4, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 2, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle Camonica UNESCO</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 2, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 1, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Table 5: Global (English) keywords and ranking of the Valle Camonica websites' visibility, November 2014](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Ranking Google</th>
<th>Ranking Yahoo</th>
<th>Ranking Bing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valle Camonica</td>
<td>Google 6, Yahoo 2, Bing 3</td>
<td>Google 4, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Google 5, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 4, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valcamonica</td>
<td>Google 3, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 2, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
<td>Google 1, Yahoo 1, Bing 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1 Considerations on the web visibility of Valle Camonica as a destination

Not surprisingly, the search engine through which Valle Camonica was more visible was Google. All the Valle Camonica websites that web users might come across appeared to be in an Italian edition, even when web users digitized English keywords in a global search engine.

Using the keywords “North Italy” or “Tourism North Italy”, there was no visibility for Valle Camonica at all. Among local tourism websites, the most visible was http://www.invallecamonica.it/.

The official tourism website http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/ could be retrieved only when using the “turismo” or “tourism” keywords.

The conclusion was reached, that information on the Web about Valle Camonica was difficult to find. Both Italian and global web users might not even know about the existence of the valley.

Possibly, Valle Camonica needs more web visibility.

4.2 Valle Camonica’s official tourism websites

As a second step in analysing the web presence of Valle Camonica, the official websites of the destination were taken into account.

A list of websites referring to Valle Camonica and its resources may result to be very long. Of them, only websites reasonably relevant in terms of tourism were considered.

The considered websites resulted to be the following
- http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/
- http://www.vallecamonica.cultura.it/
- http://www.vallecamonica.unesco.it/
- http://www.museidivallecamonica.it/
- http://www.saporidivallecamonica.it/
- http://www.segnoartigiano.it/
- http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/

A reference was also made to the following websites
- http://www.museidivallecamonica.it/
- http://www.saporidivallecamonica.it/
- http://www.segnoartigiano.it/
- http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/

Noticeably, all these websites showed a shared identity through the La Valle dei Segni logo, always displayed in their home pages.

4.2.1.1 The Valle Camonica official tourism website

The Valle Camonica official tourism website9 is supposed to be the point of reference for sharing tourist information about the valley. Immediately apparent, when visualizing the website’s home page, was the server request to share the location with the website’s server. This could be very useful, as the tourist may be able to receive instant directions and localized information. Unfortunately, an acceptance to share her/his location did not lead to any maps or other geo-referenced applications – something that can be perceived as frustrating. A link to Google Maps cartography could only be found at the top of the page, under the “How to arrive in Camonica Valley” menu item.

Another section of the website, called “Discover the Signs”, presented a segmentation of the Valle Camonica tourism offer. Photos, videos, routes, and descriptions of attractions were published. In this section a problem, common to the entire website, arose: the English edition was not fully translated, and most of the text was still in Italian.

Through the “Registration” menu item, the website provided the user with the opportunity to create her/his own profile, allowing her/him to take advantage of promotions and discounts available on the territory. Registrations could also be performed through Facebook, Twitter and Google+ accounts – a useful social tool indeed, though in practice some usability problems (password not saved, disclaimers not in English) appeared.

Connections to social networks were also found available in the “Discover Social” section, where the most recent posts on the linked social network profiles were visualized.

The “Discover Events” menu provided detailed information about what’s going on, or will soon take place, in the valley. This service looks constantly updated.

Finally, the “Download” section offered promotional materials available in different languages – likely to be digital releases of some of the destination’s printed brochures.

The official tourism website also provided links to social networks and other institutions’ websites connected to La Valle dei Segni. Among the latter, Sapori di Valle Camonica10 and Segno Artigiano11 looked particularly interesting.

The Sapori di Valle Camonica official website provided information about food and typical products of the valley, as well as about their producers. Local products in fact, specifically in a period when the Expo 2015 is scheduled in the regional capital, add up to tourism resources.

The Segno Artigiano website, on the other hand, appeared to deal with a project to promote the valley through its heritage of handicrafts and design.

---

Both these websites, however, still seemed under construction. Some sections were not available.

4.2.1.2 The Valle Camonica Cultural District official website
The second analyzed website was the one of the Distretto Culturale di Valle Camonica.\(^\text{12}\)
The first thing that was noticed was that the website was available only in Italian. This could be explained by the fact that the Cultural District has been created on a local basis: the pursued goal is to make heritage the common ground on which to develop the growth of the entire territory.
Some aspects of the usability of this website appeared to need an improvement. For example, a Flash plug-in was required on the homepage – something that could be perceived as a disadvantage.
Good connections to the main social networks were available, and a YouTube profile also existed (where, however, only few and old videos were available).
In the section “Sistemi culturali” the website provided a link to the Valle Camonica Museums System website,\(^\text{13}\) which looked interesting from the tourists’ point of view.

4.2.1.3 The Valle Camonica Unesco official website
Last to be taken into consideration was the Valle Camonica Unesco official website,\(^\text{14}\) that gave more detailed information about rock engravings. In this case, an English version was available and fully usable.
The website appeared to introduce the eight archaeological parks that can be found in the valley. Specific sections were devoted to each park, with photos and detailed descriptions about their resources. Links to the parks’ official websites and some practical information were also provided.
In the “Visiting our parks” menu a geo-referenced map of the parks was available, to help the users visualize their positions across the valley.
From this website, users could easily access other websites that organize cultural visits in the parks. In addition to this, the “All of Unesco with a click” section provided a series of useful link to the webpages of institutions connected to the heritage site.
Finally, a link in the “Download” section led to the AppleStore to install the “Valcamonica Rock Art” app, having the goal to introduce visitors to the complex and vast reality of the Valle Camonica rock engravings. English, French and German editions of this app were available. The app allowed to make a virtual tour of the parks and of its attractions through an illustrated map.

4.2.1.4 Considerations on the Valle Camonica official tourism websites
All the analyzed official websites displayed a common identity, by sharing the La Valle dei Segni logo.
The websites linked to La Valle dei Segni project appeared to be well connected among them as well as to social networks, particularly Facebook and Twitter.
The conclusion was reached, that some usability improvements might be introduced. Also, the global editions of the websites could be completed and improved: the managers, in fact, admitted they were working on this.\(^\text{15}\)

4.3 Facebook pages for tourism in Valle Camonica
In order to analyse the presence of Valle Camonica on Facebook, the main topic was to consider the Facebook pages regarding Valle Camonica and La Valle dei Segni project. Nowadays, social networks’ pages are the most common way via which companies, institutions and the like connect with their audience, which in return may expect to find updated content and be able to contact the managers to ask for information.

4.3.1. How to find the relevant Facebook pages
Four main methods can be used to find pages on Facebook:
1. through the Facebook search, using keywords – like, in our instance, “Camonica” or “Valle Camonica”. The top-5 collected results (Picture 5) included two pages related to La Valle dei Segni project, namely Turismo Valle Camonica and Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica;
2. through links on correlated websites – for instance, the Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page appeared to be accessible via http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/ (Picture 6);
3. through the “discover social” section on the homepage of http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/ (Picture 7), where the most recent status updates/tweets from different social network accounts regarding valle camonica – not only the official/institutional ones – were found collected;
4. using the #vallecamonica hashtag in a Facebook search.
Of course, it would be possible to look for relevant Facebook pages using a search engine. Nonetheless, this seemed a less practical choice: using the Facebook search was certainly more straightforward.


\(^{13}\) http://www.museidivallecamonica.it/, accessed in November 2014.

\(^{14}\) http://www.vallecamonicauenescoculture.it/, accessed on November 2014.

\(^{15}\) As from the workshop’s meeting held in Bienno at the Comunità Montana on November 29, 2014; see also note 5.
The methods mentioned above may in fact be the ones used by any web users looking for pages related to Valle Camonica. In addition to these however, in order to have a more comprehensive list for an analysis of the Facebook presence, a “crawling” method was also used; that is to say, additional findings were found following the links from the “Liked by this page” section that could be found in the “Timeline” of the Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page.

At the end of this research, many pages regarding Valle Camonica were found; these could be roughly divided in three main categories:

1. institutional pages (i.e. managed by an institution, usually a public one);
2. business pages (i.e. pertaining and managed by a private company);
3. community pages (i.e. pages with a specific topic or with information relevant to residents).

The first category included pages run by the Valle Camonica Unesco heritage site, museums, tourism offices (Pro Loco and IAT), municipalities, natural parks and the like: the research focused primarily on this group, especially on the pages regarding La Valle dei Segni. The second category gathered pages for hotels, restaurants, shops and the like. The third category consisted of pages posting general news, news about specific programmes for residents (e.g. public competitions), and photos depicting specific aspects of the valley.

4.3.2. Facebook pages for La Valle dei Segni

Four Facebook pages strictly correlated with the La Valle dei Segni project were identified.

- **Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page** [Facebook category: local business]
  https://www.facebook.com/TurismoValleCamonica

It appeared to correspond to http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/. Its content concerned attractions and some events in the valley.⁷

---

⁶ In this research, which has no pretense to be comprehensive, 65 pages belonging to the first and the third categories were found. This number and all the following data/information/images were updated as of December 18, 2014.

⁷ For an analysis of the Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page, see page 12.
- **Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica Facebook page** [Facebook category: local business]  
  https://www.facebook.com/DistrettoCulturale

  This looked to be the Facebook page for http://www.vallecamonicacultura.it/, that is the official page for the Distretto Culturale – the system within which the La Valle dei Segni project has been developed.\(^\text{18}\)

- **Infoscuola - Viaggi d'Istruzione in Valle Camonica Facebook page** [Facebook category: tours & sightseeing]  
  https://www.facebook.com/252381831467863 or  

  Infoscuola is a service supplied by the Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica; it helps schools to organize excursions in the area. The page appeared to have posted mainly about La Valle dei Segni as a project.\(^\text{19}\)

- **Segno Artigiano / Valle Camonica Facebook page** [Facebook category: product/service]  
  https://www.facebook.com/segnoartigiano

  It appeared to be related to http://www.segnoartigiano.it/, being Segno Artigiano a project developed within La Valle dei Segni. This project is aimed at gathering local artists and craftsmen, and putting their work on display. Posts on this Facebook page were found to pertain initiatives of local artists and craftsmen, and nothing else.\(^\text{20}\)

While the Turismo Valle Camonica page could be easily located using any of the four methods above, the Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica’s wasn’t found to be linked from its corresponding website. Nonetheless, both these pages were among the top-5 results of a Facebook search for both “Camonica” and “Valle Camonica”. The other two pages, connected to projects developed within the La Valle dei Segni project, raised some problems. Infoscuola - Viaggi d'Istruzione in Valle Camonica could be found using the crawling method (since it had no corresponding websites, and wasn’t linked from any La Valle dei Segni websites), or perusing the Facebook search (since it wasn’t among its very first results). Segno Artigiano / Valle Camonica had a corresponding website (also

---

\(^\text{18}\) For an analysis of the Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica Facebook page, see page 13.

\(^\text{19}\) As of December 18, 2014, Infoscuola had 211 “likes”. In November 2014, they had posted 9 times.

\(^\text{20}\) As of December 18, 2014, Segno Artigiano (Artisan Sign) had 453 “likes”. Its posts were found infrequent (in average, once a month).
linked from the footer of http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/), but wasn’t in a prominent position among the results of a Facebook search. Both these pages were in fact quite difficult to "stumble upon": they might have been easier to find when web users specifically looked for one of them. These four pages were associated through the graphic identity of their icons, which in turn were based on the official La Valle dei Segni logo (see Picture 4).

![Picture 12: Valle Camonica la valle dei segni Facebook header](Image)

4.3.3. More relevant Facebook pages and profiles for Valle Camonica

Similar icons, in fact, encourage web users to think of different pages as parts of an overarching entity. Nonetheless, this graphic identity raised an issue, as it was also used in another page, Valle Camonica la valle dei segni, which came up among the results of a relevant Facebook search. This page looked official (i.e. connected to the project), since it displayed the official La Valle dei Segni logo. The problem, however – on top of this Facebook page being inactive, and having no content – was that it was difficult to ascertain who managed it (and that may cause misunderstandings among web users, as was proven by some posts on the timeline by people who thought they were communicating with the official Facebook page for the Valle dei Segni ). If this Facebook page were used as a "placeholder" to avoid cybersquatting, it should have made users aware of the existence of the other (active) pages.

![Picture 13: Sistema dei Musei di Valle Camonica Facebook header](Image)

Another relevant project found was the Sistema dei Musei di Valle Camonica.22 It didn’t appear to run any Facebook pages, but it had a Facebook profile. If it had been a page, it might have been more manageable both for users (who wouldn’t have to worry about sharing their personal information with a "friend" they didn’t know) and the profile managers (who wouldn’t have to accept every single request). Even if this may be considered as a wishful thinking, it has to be underlined that Facebook limits the number of friends to 5,000, so that it can always come a future when a profile can’t accept any more requests23. All the content of the profile was public, however, so that it wasn’t actually needed to "befriend" the profile – which appeared to be frequently updated anyway. In addition to that, it seemed relatively difficult to come across this profile, as it wasn’t linked from the corresponding http://www.museidivallecamonica.it/ website.

An issue with the web communication of Sistema dei Musei di Valle Camonica was that it didn’t appear to keep up any graphic identities with any La Valle dei Segni Facebook pages or websites: its icon was completely different. Also, several museums included in the system were found to run their own independent Facebook pages. It might perhaps be good, if a strategy of content sharing were implemented among them. Moreover, it might be observed that the La Valle dei Segni project includes Sapori di Valle Camonica, the website of which, http://www.saporidivallecamonica.it/, was linked from the footer of http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/. Sapori di Valle Camonica didn’t appear to run any Facebook pages. The only possibly related Facebook page seemed to be the one of the GAL Valle Camonica Val di Scalve, managing this sub-project and its website.

21 This page was listed within the “Tours/Sightseeing” category and its url was https://www.facebook.com/pages/Valle-Camonica-la-valle-dei-segni/157153081052616
22 Sistema dei musei di Valle Camonica (i.e. the Museum System of Valle Camonica) is the network among museums in the valley; the url for its profile was http://www.facebook.com/musei.vallecamonica
23 As of December 18, 2014, this profile had 1,962 "friends".
24 Sapori di Valle Camonica (or "Tastes of Valle Camonica") is a project about typical agricultural and farming products. As of December 18, 2014, no more information was available on their official website.
Considering the Facebook pages somehow connected with La Valle dei Segni, another issue concerned the pages from the Unesco heritage site, actually eight archaeological parks – only three of which, however, appeared to run a Facebook page on their own.\(^{25}\)

The official website for the heritage site, http://www.vallecamonicaunesco.it/, was found to display the La Valle dei Segni logo (see Picture 14), and a link to it was published in the footer of http://www.turismovallecamonica.it/. Nonetheless, no link to any Facebook pages of the parks was found in the official website for the heritage site. Considering the importance of these attractions – even with regard to the name of the project itself – “virtual” links among these website/pages might positively be added.

Finally, it was interesting to notice that posts or content regarding La Valle dei Segni could also be reached by using the #valledeisegni hashtag. This hashtag, however, proved to be much less substantial than #vallecamonica.

### 4.3.4 Analysis of the two main Valle Camonica Facebook pages

Having located the Facebook pages related to La Valle dei Segni, the next step was to analyse the most important of them, in order to grasp a general idea of how the destination and the project present themselves to web users. Therefore, the research focused specifically on the Turismo Valle Camonica and the Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica Facebook pages, and considered in connection to them the websites that an average web user might be thought to come across while looking for information about Valle Camonica.\(^{26}\)

In order to analyse these Facebook pages, four main topics were considered:

- the content of the pages (photos, events, information, news, links and the like);
- their target audiences – to which market segments the posts were addressed;
- the frequency of updates, and whether comments were answered;
- the presence of a “Reviews” section.

#### 4.3.4.1 The Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page

Turismo Valle Camonica\(^{27}\) (see Picture 8) was found categorized as a “Local Business” (although this categorization looked misleading – it’s perhaps more appropriate for a private business – and another category might be considered). Its posts mainly mentioned tourist attractions in Valle Camonica. Analyising the contents of these pages, some recurring themes were found that concur to build up an identity: history/culture, sport, nature, eno-gastronomy, La Valle dei Segni. None of these themes however – or any other posts – were developed in-depth, arguably because the managers thought that users would look for more information in the correspondent website. The latter was mentioned both in the “About” section and in the header. No specific target audiences appeared to be considered. Only general references to nature, culture, eno-gastronomy and open-air activities were made – which might lead to think of families and adult couples as potential audiences. Other observations about the content of the page follow.

- Updates looked frequent (varying between 5 and 10 posts per week); Many of them, however, were pictures from the #picoftheweek contest, allowing users to send in their own photos and select the best one.
- The language of the posts was mainly Italian. Only some of the posts were translated into English.
- Comments were quite few, compared to the number of “likes”;\(^{28}\) and they were mainly written by Italian or Italian-speaking users. The managers of the page acknowledged or answered the comments very often.

---

\(^{25}\) The Camuni archaeological parks with Facebook pages are the Parco Nazionale delle Incisioni Rupestri - Naquane, the Parco Archeologico di Seradina-Bedolina, and the Riserva naturale Incisioni rupestri di Ceto, Cimbergo e Paspardo. Moreover, the existing pages were quite difficult to find; they weren’t even linked from the corresponding official websites.

\(^{26}\) As mentioned before, the url is http://www.facebook.com/TurismoValleCamonica. As of December 18, 2014, the number of “likes” was 3,995.

\(^{27}\) Even if, as it was observed in the section regarding Valle Camonica and its presence in search engines, the websites connected to La Valle dei Segni are not usually the first ones that a web user may find.

\(^{28}\) About 25 comments per 20 posts (the most recent ones as of December 18, 2014), though it has to be noticed that only a couple of posts generated more than half of the comments. Nonetheless, each post was “liked” by a good number of people (between 6 and 40).
There were many photos of landscapes and food, to promote eno-gastronomic products. Moreover, users were called on to participate in the abovementioned #picoftheweek contest by sending their photos of Valle Camonica. Also, a video introduced the corresponding website.

The “About” section provided the managers’ physical address (though without a map\textsuperscript{29}), contact information (e-mail address), website url, and a short description of their tasks.

The “Events” section was missing. Sporadic information about some events was found in the caption of a photo illustrating the event.

The “Reviews” section was missing, too.

4.3.4.2 The Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica Facebook Page

Distretto Culturale Valle Camonica\textsuperscript{30} (see Picture 9) was found categorized as a “Local Business”. Again, as for Turismo Valle Camonica, a different category was thought to be more useful in helping users understand what the page is about. This is an issue, because it’s not clear who the managers are and what they do: no information or clue is provided either in the header (i.e. through the cover photo) or in the “About” section.

Some observations about the content of the page follow.

- The page appeared to be frequently updated (more than 5 times a week, though less often than Turismo Valle Camonica).
- The language used was exclusively Italian (while in Turismo Valle Camonica some of the posts were translated into English).
- Comments were very few – here, too – compared to the number of “likes” (much fewer than in Turismo Valle Camonica).\textsuperscript{31} They were acknowledged almost always, anyway.
- The published photos seemed to stress the importance of nature and cultural events. Also, there were six videos about cultural topics within Valle Camonica.
- The “About” section provided an address using Bing maps,\textsuperscript{32} contact information (phone number), and the website url. No description was found of what a Distretto Culturale is: this may be deemed necessary, as the institution’s name is not self-explanatory at all.
- The “Events” section was missing in this page, too; as in Turismo Valle Camonica, communication about events was left to infrequent posts.
- The “Reviews” section is available, and contains two evaluations.\textsuperscript{33}

4.3.5. Considerations on the Facebook pages for tourism in Valle Camonica

Content-wise, three main issues came to mind.

1. Inviting tourists to come to Valle Camonica on special occasions would perhaps be easier, if an “Events” section were created. No “Events” section was found available in any of the Facebook pages relating to La Valle dei Segni. A strategy of sporadically promoting events through posts – mostly very general photos, accompanied by a description of the event in question – is not optimal, as posts about events may easily get lost among other recent posts (though, admittedly, the Facebook platform allows to emphasize individual posts). An “Events” section would display all items in chronological order, and provide potential tourists with the opportunity to browse them, in order to plan their trip.

2. Communication among the various La Valle dei Segni Facebook pages could positively be improved. These pages appeared neither to share content (i.e. share posts) nor acknowledge one another. Better communication among the La Valle dei Segni Facebook pages would help web users to find – and come to know – more actors in the project.

3. More attention to the international audience could be devoted. Only a very small part of the content (i.e. some posts in the Turismo Valle Camonica Facebook page) was found translated into English. The same problem, on the other hand, was identified in the Valle Camonica websites. This is likely to depend on the most traditional sort of tourism in Valle Camonica – mainly Italian or regional tourism.

Regarding the Valle Camonica Facebook presence, another issue is the lack of a page representing the Unesco heritage site as a whole. Though this issue is not directly dependent on La Valle dei Segni and its management, it’s nonetheless relevant for two reasons: the importance of the heritage site as a part of the tourism offer of the area,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} As in Turismo Valle Camonica, the provided address is the one of Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica.
\item \textsuperscript{30} As mentioned in the previous section, the url is http://www.facebook.com/DistrettoCulturale. The number of “likes” was 2,547 (as of December 18, 2014).
\item \textsuperscript{31} About 6 comments every 20 posts (the most recent ones as of December 18, 2014). The number of “likes” per posts was also lower than in Turismo Valle Camonica (never more than 10 likes, and often fewer than 5).
\item \textsuperscript{32} As in Turismo Valle Camonica, the provided address was the one of Comunità Montana di Valle Camonica.
\item \textsuperscript{33} It’s quite questionable, however, why this page offered this option: it’s neither a service or an actual destination. On the other hand, no “Reviews” section was found available in the Turismo Valle Camonica page.
\end{itemize}

and its role in the framework of the brand. At the basis of that issue there is, probably, the same question which also prevents Valle Camonica from keeping up a “virtual” appearance of a united and homogeneous destination. For example, there is no uniformity in the presence of tourism offices (Pro Loco and IAT) for the valley: some offices have an updated page, others have a page without adequate content, yet others do not have a page at all. Of course the virtual (thus, Facebook) presence reflects an issue of the real world, that is to say the presence and coexistence of many institutions and groups managing different parts of the tourism offer of Valle Camonica. Nonetheless, it would certainly be possible to achieve the “appearance” of a unified destination by creating a sort of list of the official or institutional pages, in order to help tourists to find the pages they want/need even when these can afford less exposure in terms of number of “likes”.

Within the Facebook presence for the La Valle dei Segni, a higher level of coordination may well be achieved.

4.4 Valle Camonica tourism’s web presence in social networks other than Facebook

Apart from Facebook – considered the most widespread and best known social network on the web community - a brief research regarding the Valle Camonica web presence was performed on other social platforms, which count a large amount of users. The social networks taken into consideration were Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Flickr.

4.4.1 Twitter

The official La Valle dei Segni Twitter profile was found highly operative, as the large amount of tweets, followers, retweets and shared content testified. The Twitter profile seemed to be adopted as a really active platform, and was constantly updated with posts related to the promotion of events in the valley or to the main topic trends discussed among the social community.

The #vallecamiconica hashtag was found popular, too. A research through the internal Twitter search engine led to find lots of photos, videos and other content generated by the users.

While looking for the official profile, however, users could be misled by the “It’s Vallecamonica” profile. This is a non official, maybe privately run profile, promoting and sharing details related to cultural and commercial events in the valley. This looked like an identity problem, potentially leading users to confusion.

The official Twitter profile was anyway identified as a plus, since it appeared to reach the engagement of the audience, and at the same time allow the image of the valley to gain positivity.

4.4.2 Instagram

Though La Valle dei Segni has opened an official Instagram account, this account didn’t seem to be operative. Again, an identity problem was found, as another privately-run profile related to the valley was prominent in Instagram. This problem could be obviously solved, as soon as the official profile would start to publish content.

The #vallecamiconica topic was anyway found well spread, and frequently used among the Instagram community. A brief research for photos taken and shared by users under #vallecamiconica came across more than 4,000 posts.

4.4.3 YouTube

An official “Valle Camonica Distretto Culturale” YouTube channel was found available, but it seemed to be stuck in the past. The last official video was tagged as published “one year ago”. A research through the internal YouTube search engine found neither promotional videos under the “Valle dei Segni” brand, nor videos for English speakers. Other pertinent keywords – like “engravings”, “prehistoric” or “Unesco heritage” – didn’t provide any better results.

4.4.4 Flickr

Lots of relevant user-generated content were retrieved in this community, where photos are surely more professional than those shared on Instagram. Two different groups related to the Valle Camonica were spotted, but no official profile was available. This situation might perhaps be improved, as Flickr photos are – generally speaking – more beautiful and better edited. They can play a potentially big part in terms of promotion.

4.4.5 Considerations on the Valle Camonica’s web presence in social networks other than Facebook

When dealing with social networks and large communities other than Facebook, the Valle Camonica appeared to be strongly present only on Twitter. YouTube didn’t really seem to be adopted as a communication channel. Instagram and Flickr, too – perfect platforms for user-generated content – could definitely be better integrated and coordinated through official and institutional profiles.

Social Media are powerful tools, even more when connected and engaging. The valley, however, seems to lack a basic network among these different platforms. Some coordination seemed to be working only between Facebook and Twitter.

4.5 Valle Camonica’s web presence in travel communities

The web presence of Valle Camonica in some most popular travel communities websites – TripAdvisor, VirtualTourist, the Lonely Planet ThornTree Forum, Frommer’s, and Fodor’s Travel – was also taken into consideration and discussed.
4.5.1. **Valle Camonica on TripAdvisor**

TripAdvisor, undoubtedly the world’s largest travel website, offers trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of travel choices. According to MMGY Global/Harrison Group 2013, TripAdvisor was the most regularly visited advisory site, mentioned by nearly seven in ten American leisure travelers (67%) who have visited online communities, travel forums, or blogs.

In the search for the presence of Valle Camonica in TripAdvisor, the keyword “Valle Camonica” was used on the search engine of the site. However, the search engine suggested as a more relevant keyword “Alta Valle Camonica”. The result of this search (Picture 15) led to 22 reviews: 20 in 22 visitors had evaluated the place as Excellent, and 2 as Very Good. The categories of travelers ranged from Families (8 reviews) to Couples (7 reviews), and from Solo (2 reviews) to Business (3 reviews).

![Picture 15: Reviews of Valle Camonica in TripAdvisor, retrieved December 23, 2014](image)

Investigating the nationalities of visitors, one of them came from Belgium, and two others from Germany. The rest were Italian tourists from the neighborhood area, like the towns of Milano and Como.

This result was a big surprise, because Valle Camonica was Italy’s first recognized Unesco heritage site. From this point of view, Valle Camonica can’t be considered as a famous tourism attraction or a well-known destination – not even among national tourists, especially in the North of Italy.

Due to the fact that Valle Camonica is included in the administrative territory of the province of Brescia, a search with the keywords “Brescia Ski” was also performed. When looking for skiing in the province of Brescia, only one review was found (Picture 16) referring to Montecampione, a ski resort in Lower Valle Camonica. Surprisingly, the more famous Adamello ski area in Upper Valle Camonica was not included in the search result.

![Picture 16: Search results with the keywords “Brescia Ski” in TripAdvisor, retrieved December 23, 2014](image)

For a bigger scale of searching, yet another search with the keywords “Lombardy Ski” was conducted (Picture 17). This time, the result mentioned the Adamello area around Ponte di Legno, in the Vacation Rentals section.

---

34 comScore Media Metrix for TripAdvisor Sites, worldwide, August 2014.
37 See above, page 3.

In conclusion, some places of Valle Camonica were present in TripAdvisor, but with a very low frequency. The brand of the whole Valle Camonica resulted as unknown, hiding or not recognizable by national and international tourists. Since TripAdvisor is dominating the use of travel communities and blogs – due to its user-generated content, eye-catching visualization, effective commercial trip planner, and review site covering much of the globe – Valle Camonica may definitively improve its web presence, if it really wants to reach the brand of a World Heritage.

4.5.2 Valle Camonica on VirtualTourist

With its slogan “The People Behind the Places,” VirtualTourist is a worldwide travel community, where travelers and locals share travel advice and experiences. Established in 1999, six years before the creation of TripAdvisor, VirtualTourist has an enormous amount of registered members from more than 220 countries and territories. Using the same keyword Valle Camonica as in TripAdvisor (Picture 17), the result showed 15 destinations apparently related to valley – but they were some other valleys in Europe, North and South America, and not Valle Camonica. International travelers who commented in this forum had either never been in Valle Camonica, or never mentioned it in their travel journals. The existence of Valle Camonica was unanticipatedly remote among this travel community.

4.5.3 Valle Camonica on Lonely Planet ThornTree Forum

As a part of the Lonely Planet organization since 1996, the ThornTree Forum is “maestro of travel community forums,” and features discussion and information on destinations and travel modes. It is said to “cover every place on the planet.”

The search result for Valle Camonica in the ThornTree Forum indicated only one thread (Picture 18), proposed by a group of three individuals asking for advice and suggestion when they wanted to visit Val Camonica “one year ago” in September – supposed to be September 2013.

---

The thread endured fairly for seven mutual responds, and demonstrated a minor interact of travelers when not so much people knew anything about Valle Camonica.

4.5.4 Valle Camonica on the Frommer's website
Frommer’s, an American specialized publishing house established in 1957, asserts to be “an essential online destination” for those planning a travel excursion. Visitors find articles written by Frommer’s experts as well as excerpts from Frommer’s guidebooks and insights from message boards.  

With the keyword Valle Camonica, Frommer’s forum did not reveal any clue about the valley (Picture 20): just some places in Italy were shown (this could be related to the Italian term Valle). Obviously, still no positive result was apparent from this community to prove that Valle Camonica does exist in the map of international travelers.

4.5.5 Valle Camonica on the Fodor’s Travel website
Fodor’s “offers the assurance of our expertise, the guarantee of selectivity, and the choice details that truly define a destination. Fodor’s actively connects to all crucial social and media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and Instagram, therefore fully supported travelers to possibly make a memorable trip of lifetime.”

The Fodor’s website allows users to set time for a search at a maximum of 3-year range. The time set chosen for Valle Camonica was from 23/12/2011 to 23/12/2014. The result is published (Picture 21). Wistfully, there was no result for Valle Camonica: nobody had mentioned or asked about the valley.

4.4.5 Considerations on the Valle Camonica’s web presence in social networks

Summarily, the presence of Valle Camonica in travel communities is very limited and seemingly still in a nutshell. Noticing the advantages and disadvantages of Valle Camonica, along with the assistance of technology in a flat world, we hope that Valle Camonica can step by step manage to rise up among millions of destinations and become an unprecedented place and extend its fame through the world of tourism.

Reference
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Val_Camonica
http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distretto_culturale
http://itinerariumbrescia.it/territorio/valle-camonica/
http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/Allegati/all_23155_00_A-Documento%20strategico.pdf
http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it/App_Functions/DB_File.aspx?id=412927
http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/progetti/arte/distretti-culturali/distretti-culturali.html
http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/static/upload/6-s/6-sei-distretti.pdf
http://www.unionealtavallecamonica.bs.it/Allegati/all_32578_02_PARTE%201.pdf
http://www.vallecamonicacultura.it/convegno/pdf/MarcoTottoli.pdf
Provincia di Brescia, Assessorato al Turismo, Ufficio promozione e statistica