

Module 1
Cyber Scanning Report

Summary of Scan

While engaging in cyber scanning, we monitored Oklahoma's Travel and Tourism Department official website and Facebook, onlyinyourstate.com, and multiple Quoras related to opinions of Oklahoma. We began with seeking information about what comes to mind when people think about Oklahoma. Initially, the physical geography of flat, prairie land was the first thing on the list. Just behind physical geography was the economic impact of the oil boom and subsequent oil industry market. Another driving image that came to mind for most people was college football as OU and OSU have had great seasons in 2019. The Oklahoma City bombing and memorial site came in at number five on the list, which is something to keep in mind when gauging attitudes of potential travelers who have never visited and only know about what has made national news coverage. Most people associated Oklahoma with country lifestyles and music, and a key part of this is that Oklahoma is home to Toby Keith and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Most people are aware of the history of Native American tribes and communities, and later the development of gaming as part of reparations following the Trail of Tears. Many comments on a Quora covering what it is like to live in Oklahoma were surrounding the subject matter of Native American tribes and reservations, as well as their history. After viewing the rankings of what people think of Oklahoma, we researched Quoras to get direct opinions. One topic that was brought up frequently was Oklahoma's public education ranking. Quora user Don Spradlin commented, "I was fortunate to escape that bubble of provincial, poorly educated, proudly untraveled, and generally low income folks." This is a sentiment echoed by many users, and one pointed out that Oklahoma prisons are better funded than public education. Linked to these comments are other comments concerning funding as Oklahoma is a red state in the Bible belt south with a majority of conservative-leaning citizens. Many of the comments made were related to conservative idealisms and how they have impacted state institutions in negative ways. Another key component identified in the Quoras was the notion that religion plays a heavy role in the culture of Oklahoma. Churches of most Christian denominations can be found in every county. Other comments reflected upon Oklahoma's southern charm and hospitality, as well as the fact that it is not a metropolitan state and has not been able to become home to a major league sports team.

Finally, we spent time looking over the Travel and Tourism Department's official website, and we noticed that many of the travel initiatives were rooted in hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor activities. These were the initiatives that were covered most on the site's Facebook, and many people still had questions because of incomplete or lack of information listed on the site. Another thing we noticed from the official site is under the tab that says cities, only counties and regions were listed, even though Oklahoma City is growing and becoming more developed by the day. The website is seemingly outdated and is lacking updated information about things and activities to do. In addition, the main selling point of travel in Oklahoma were outdoor activities, however Oklahoma has many festivals that bring in thousands but aren't being advertised whatsoever. For example, Oktoberfest in Tulsa, OK brings hundreds of people to the city for an annual adult-friendly beer fair. Norman hosts music festivals, but none are advertised. Many of Oklahoma's lakes aren't even mentioned. The website also had

some negative reviews posted to the department's Facebook stating that the website is cluttered and can be confusing to navigate.

Potential Problems

Problems found in Oklahoma stem from the industries within the state, and the people those industries attract. The gaming industry is a major reason people from outside of Oklahoma travel to the state. Gaming, while not negative in itself, is surrounded by controversy at the moment. Gov. Kevin Stitt is currently in a lawsuit against indigenous tribes in order to raise the revenue rate that they currently pay to the state from their gaming profit. With this profit, the indigenous tribes have created hospitals, provided free healthcare for their people, as well as even make large contributions to rural communities outside of the reservation. These rural communities have received the funding which made it possible for them to have firefighters, police and even paramedics. If the revenue rate were to increase, the tribes would begin to find themselves unable to fund all of the things they previously did. With a decline in rural areas and potential national news coverage, this will only harm state tourism. The state will only further the negative stigma so many people hold. The casinos themselves may witness a decline in their appeal and amenities due to less money being put back into them, which surely will hurt the gaming tourism industry.

Another potential problem stems from the hunting industry, with two parts stemming from this. First, illegal poaching during the off-season or of protected animals is a major issue. Game wardens simply cannot monitor every visiting hunter within the state, which increases crime as well as is detrimental to the survival of protected animals. Another issue stemming from the hunting industry comes in the form of rentals. If hunting were continue to be a major attraction, those who rent the cabins and properties would benefit greatly from this. If hunting were to be more regulated, the attraction could potentially go down, which would lead to a substantial financial downturn for so many Oklahomans who rely on these rental properties as their income.

Throughout Oklahoma, there has been an increase in the number of crime-related disappearances and sexual assaults within indigenous tribes throughout the state. This trend directly correlates with the increase of outside individuals into the reservations. Whether Oklahoma citizens, or travelers from other states, indigenous women and children are disproportionately affected by sexual assault, kidnapping and murder. Because Tribal communities have their own respective police forces and governments, these cases often go cold because of the disconnect between state law enforcement and tribal law enforcement. It is likely that tribes will take issue with an influx of visitors encroaching on tribal reservations and communities.

Other problems could be lack of funding for rebranding and relaunching the department as well as the website. In addition, modernizing and revolutionizing tourist markets that are not advertised on the travel website could cause residents to become irritated or transition to activist publics. Many positive sentiments of Oklahoma come from older generations and demographics who value Oklahoma's quaint and quiet environment, even though its cities are growing and becoming increasingly metropolitan. An increase of people moving or touring Oklahoma is good for the state because of revenue brought in by these groups, however it is naive to assume that people who enjoy the southern, quiet country state aspect will not take issue.

Potential Activist Publics

Some potential activists that are affected by the influx of people to Oklahoma are indigenous tribes, animal rights groups/anti-poaching groups and A Chance to Change, an organization that fights gambling addiction.

Animal rights groups as well as anti-poaching groups have the same goal, to protect animal populations from potential threats. If poaching was not regulated properly, many animal populations would become endangered or extinct within the state, the entire hunting industry which attracts so much tourism would collapse. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation prevents poaching within the state through game wardens. With an excess of poachers, the organization would be unable to properly monitor the wildlife populations, which is crucial to the success of the industry.

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Although gaming is a major part of Oklahoma's economy, activist groups against gambling addictions could potentially take issue with casinos and gaming being advertised as one of the main things to do in Oklahoma. Casinos bring in a lot of revenue to the state, however also cause an increase in gambling addiction for citizens who reside in the state. It could also potentially negatively impact those who visit who have a gambling problem.

Another activist public could be Oklahoma travel and booking agencies as well as other third party businesses like AirBnB, other hotels.com. These third party businesses could help or hinder Oklahoma tourism by making booking travel easier for those who want to visit. On the other hand, these third party sites could negatively impact travelers if they have a negative experience with a booking site or agency. They could attribute their negative experience to Oklahoma and hold negative sentiments.

Some Oklahoma citizens enjoy Oklahoma the way that it is. Many citizens of small, rural towns might have an issue with their towns or counties being overrun by tourists because it disrupts the culture of their environment. Change is hard for some older generations to accept, and it would be foolish to assume that all established citizens or communities appreciate tourism initiatives.

SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Oklahoma's parks and recreation department is advertised well.- Website is easy to navigate.- Lists activity tabs that users can click on and be provided with more information about.- Highlights nature as being a main attraction to visiting Oklahoma- Every activity has good, descriptive photos that explain the activity- Ability to filter your search which makes it easier for the tourist to pinpoint exactly what he/she wants- Has videos to highlight the Oklahoma state parks- Appeal to demographics who partake in southern sport and participate in southern lifestyles such as: hunting, fishing, camping, climbing etc.	<u>Weaknesses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cluttered and confusing website.- There aren't any cities mentioned directly under the cities and regions tab, causing potential travelers to miss out on tourism opportunities in major cities.- There is no mention of the OKC Thunder or things to do in OKC, which is expanding and growing. This also limits people who are interested in knowing more about state government or policies that could affect businesses should someone want to move and open one, especially because OKC has the state capitol.- Festivals and big events that are coming up should be promoted in a more clear format.- Lacking appeal to younger generations and people who aren't interested in outdoor activities.- The website interface is outdated, and the information could be updated.- There are no question and answer sections.- There are no highlighted reviews or testimonies of why people enjoy travelling or living in Oklahoma.- Over 65 different activity tabs, which is overwhelming.
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<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The inclusion of a tab or link to OKC events and what's in the city would draw in demographics that aren't interested in the outdoors aspect of OK travel. - Increasing awareness of cities in Oklahoma, like Tulsa, that is also experiencing slow growth, but could benefit from promotion of festivals and events taking place. - Diversifying the website to appeal to younger generations, as well as people with other interests, would put money 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major populated cities in neighboring states, such as Dallas less than 2 hours away from the Southern border - Website highlights the main attraction of Oklahoma tourism being in its nature, yet many nearby states, such as Colorado, are more well known for this - Texas is Oklahoma's neighboring state and has all of these outdoor travel activities and similar initiatives, but also has four major metropolitan cities. In addition, Texas has better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - back into the state by advertising - events or locations that aren't typical of other States. Highlight OU Football- with no NFL team, OU Football is the major team within the state. With it being nationally ranked each season, advertising the football experience - within a game day in Norman could attract sports fans and potential - students Tulsa has an international airport and it isn't mentioned In Oklahoma, potential business owners in the market for a new site to launch a new branch or run a start-up would find themselves in a market analogous to 'a big fish in a small pond', meaning that Oklahoma promotes growth with lower odds of threatening competition as opposed to Dallas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education, business opportunity, workforce expansion, and specialized work opportunities. Oklahoma only has two major universities and Texas has eight division one universities.

