

Tourism and Generation Y



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About the Editors

Pierre Benckendorff, PhD, is a senior lecturer in Tourism Management and Business in the School of Business, James Cook University, Australia. He has taught and developed undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in introductory tourism management, international tourism, tourism transportation, tourism technologies, tourism analysis, and personal and professional skills in business and marketing communications. His research interests include visitor attraction management, tourist shopping, tourism in built environments, tourism and technology, bibliometric analysis of tourism, tourism and generation Y, and tourism education. He has authored and co-authored a number of academic articles and publications in these areas. Pierre is a ‘cusper’, born between Generations X and Y. His partner and siblings are members of Generation Y and he is the proud father of the next great generation of youth.

Gianna Moscardo, PhD, is a professor of Business Studies and Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Law, Business and the Creative Arts at James Cook University (JCU), Australia. She has authored or co-authored more than 140 refereed international research publications including three research books and four edited books, 60 articles in international academic journals, 34 chapters in edited academic books and 42 refereed papers published in international conference proceedings (including 2 best paper awards). She has published with 42 different co-authors including JCU colleagues, other academics – within Australia and internationally – research students and research staff. Gianna’s contribution to tourism as a field of study has been acknowledged by her peers with her election to the International Academy for the Study of Tourism (IAST). She is a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Travel Research and Tourism Analysis*. Gianna describes herself as a Gen Yer trapped in the body of a Baby Boomer. She has two Gen Y children and Gen Z grandchildren.

Donna Pendergast, PhD, is Associate Professor and Head of the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Gold Coast Campus, Australia. She has published widely in the fields of teacher education, particularly middle school, adolescents, learning and engagement, family and consumer studies, public health, generational theory with a focus on Y generation, and hospitality and tourism education. In 2007, she published the book *The Millennial Adolescent*, which took a socio-cultural look at contemporary school students and their multi-generational teachers. The lens employed for this venture was generational theory. Donna has presented more than 50 school professional-development sessions along with several international keynote addresses on the topic of generational theory applied to a range of contexts. Donna has Silent Generation parents and is an X Gener, married to a Baby Boomer. She has X Generation siblings, four Y Generation nieces and nephews and a Z Generation daughter.

Introduction

Tourism is often described as a contemporary social phenomenon, and as such the relationship between tourism and society is complex and mediated by many variables. The purpose of this book is to explore the concept of generational cohorts and its implications for tourism. In particular, this book focuses on a generational cohort variously referred to as Generation Y, the Y Generation, the Net or Web Generation, the Millennials, Nexters, Thatcher's Children, Generation Next, Echo Boomers or the Digital Generation, and these labels are used interchangeably throughout the book. While there is some dispute over the exact time frame, most definitions used in this book refer to people born between 1977 and 2003 – although some chapters discuss a narrower range within these broad parameters. This generational cohort is now reaching adulthood, creating new opportunities for research exploring their characteristics, values, attitudes and consumption patterns in tourism. This cohort will by 2020 become the leaders, managers and consumers of tourism experiences.

Cohort analysis is based on the notion that generational cohorts share a common and distinctive social character shaped by their experiences through time. This distinctive and unique pattern of values, attitudes and behaviours has important implications for how a generation will respond to, and create change in, a number of public and social arenas. While a focus on generational or cohort effects is not a new theme, what is noteworthy about Generation Y is the widespread discussion of this as a uniquely different generation to those that have gone before. Within the tourism literature, the evidence to support such claims is limited and there is no substantial empirical support for the assumption that this age cohort shares a set of social values and attitudes that is both widespread within the cohort and uniquely different to other cohorts.

Much of the material describing Generation Y and proposing future implications from these descriptions is generated by the mass media, commercial consultants and social survey research companies. This information is, however, limited in that few, if any, methodological details are provided, and often quite contradictory claims are made leading to very disparate conclusions and recommendations. In some countries, the popular media has enthusiastically embraced the concept of generational differences and this has served to reinforce the notion of generational difference in the minds of the general public. In Australia, two high rating television shows – *Packed to the Rafters*, launched in August 2008, and *Talkin' 'Bout Your Generation*, launched in May 2009 – are based around the notion of generational stereotypes. Many Hollywood films also reinforce these generational stereotypes, irrespective of whether they are actually accurate. From a sociological perspective, these observations suggest that generational differences exist simply because people believe they exist – in a sense generational cohorts become a self-perpetuating fabrication. Generational stereotypes have also infiltrated the tourism industry. The 'Asia-Pacific Baby-Boomer Tourism Summit' was recently hosted in Sydney, Australia, and was designed to

define and understand the Baby-Boomer generation and to respond to the issues influencing its growth. The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC), also in Australia, has recently established a project called QTIC-Y to raise the awareness of Generation-Y priorities to the wider tourism industry, government and media. These developments suggest that there is a growing need for an academic voice to provide critical appraisal and research.

Generation Y is emerging as a topic of interest in academic literature but the material that is available in academic publications is almost exclusively based on US populations. In contrast with other age-related market segments (i.e. seniors' tourism), surprisingly little research has been conducted on Generation Y and tourism. The genesis of this book represents an attempt to explore whether generational cohorts such as Generation Y can be identified in a tourism context, and whether they exhibit characteristics that are different to other generations. A great deal of tourism research has focused on cross-cultural differences and their implications for the management of tourism organizations and destinations. While the term 'culture' has many connotations, in some respects it can be argued that cultural differences are akin to generational differences and that these differences are equally important in the management of tourism.

The book includes a range of applied and conceptual chapters. The applied chapters offer a mix of both qualitative and quantitative studies. While there are a number of contributions from Australasia, the book also includes chapters from North America and Asia. These chapters have been arranged into three parts. The first four chapters adopt a holistic approach. The first chapter by Donna Pendergast provides an overview of generational cohorts and discusses some of the unique characteristics that have been associated with Generation Y. The second chapter by Gianna Moscardo and Pierre Benckendorff provides a more critical appraisal of the research, in an attempt to separate Generation-Y myths from the facts. This chapter also presents a framework for understanding and researching generational differences and argues for the need for longitudinal research. Yu-Chin Huang and James Petrick's chapter adopts a market segmentation approach to explore the differences between the Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. The fourth chapter applies a simple version of the model proposed by Moscardo and Benckendorff in Chapter 2 to a longitudinal data set, in an attempt to systematically analyse the generational characteristics of travellers visiting the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Part II of the book examines the behaviour of Gen Y travellers in a range of tourism contexts and niche areas, including wine tourism, adventure tourism and nature-based tourism. The qualitative contribution on wine tourism (Joanna Fountain and Steve Charters) summarizes the experience of 24 Generation-Y participants visiting various wineries in Australasia, and identifies a number of implications based on expectations of cellar-door experiences among this group. In a similar vein, the chapter from Gayle Jennings and colleagues provides some insight into the importance of quality to Generation-Y adventure travellers in Australia. The chapter by Lori Pennington-Gray and Sandy Blair offers a strong empirical contribution using Palmore's cohort analysis to determine whether Generation Y is mainly responsible for the increased participation in nature-based travel in North America. The chapter by Minkyung Park and colleagues on the Net Generation in South Korea is particularly interesting as it represents the only Asian contribution to this book. This chapter begins to address the very clear need for further studies to extend our understanding of Generation Y across a range of ethnic groups, religions and nationalities. The final two chapters of Part II represent strong conceptual contributions from Jeff Wilks and Donna Pendergast, but deal with two quite different issues related to traveller safety. A chapter on beach safety provides a unique perspective on two groups of Y-Generation youth involved in tourism: travellers and those tasked with ensuring their safety. The chapter on personal safety adopts a much broader perspective and discusses external threats such as terrorism and crime, and physical and environmental risks that confront Generation-Y travellers.

The final part of this book examines the role of Generation Y as consumers and producers of tourism experiences. The chapter by Marsha Loda and Barbara Coleman argues convincingly that while Gen Y is the most technologically savvy in history, they still continue to consume traditional media such as television and magazines, which should not be ignored by advertisers. The

next two chapters examine Generation Y as employees and producers of tourism experiences. Scott Richardson presents a useful analysis of Generation Y's attitudes and perceptions towards a career in the industry, while Grant Cairncross and Jeremy Buultjens present the results of a series of focus groups and individual interviews with tourism and hospitality managers. The final chapter by Petra Glover attempts to provide a glimpse of the future by presenting an overview of the opportunities and challenges that may arise when the older members of Generation Y are in their 30s and early 40s.

In spite of the work presented in this book, there continues to be a paucity of data on generational differences and their impact on tourism. From a marketing perspective, there is a need to examine not only Generation Y, but also Generation X and the Baby Boomers, who represent substantial market segments. From a human-resource management perspective, there are some serious gaps in our understanding of generational differences and their implications for tourism workplaces. This book seeks to provide a landmark publication discussing the latest developments, trends and research dealing with Generation Y and tourism. It is hoped that this book will stimulate debate and interest around the topic of generational cohorts and tourism. The quest to understand generational characteristics is never ending. As the chapter by Petra Glover illustrates, as each generation passes through different life-cycle stages, there are likely to be new questions that need to be answered. Tourism researchers and scholars are in a unique position to attempt to answer these questions in an objective manner.

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1 Getting to Know the Y Generation

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Introduction

The profile of the tourism industry is characterized by multigenerational visitors and a multi-generational workforce. A major shift in the balance of generational dominance is currently occurring, with the 'Baby Boomer' generation exiting the leadership roles in the workforce and the Y Generation dramatically entering, both in the workforce and as visitors. According to generational theory, each generation brings with them somewhat predictable traits, values and beliefs, along with skills, attributes, capacities, interests, expectations and preferred modus operandi directly attributable to their generational location. For the tourism industry, insights gained through the lens of generational theory has the potential to guide the incentives, the motivators, the leadership models and the overall culture of the profession to better connect with the Y Generation as the most recent members of the tourism workforce and as the current and future visitor market. This chapter sets out to provide some foundations around the concept of generations, discuss the demography and unique character traits of members of the Y Generation by drawing on a renowned generational theorist, and begin to consider this cohort as tourism, consumers. This chapter will thus serve as a platform for the following chapters in the book.

Generational Theory

Concept

The idea of 'generation' and 'generation gap' derived from generational theory is not a new concept (Mannheim, 1952), nor is it uncontested (Donnison, 2007; Huntley, 2006). Furthermore, there is not one accepted or 'true' version of generational theory, there are a number of competing versions available as credible and legitimate for theorizing using this framework. This chapter draws on several of the more popular and internationally renowned theorists in the field, in particular Mannheim (1952), Howe and Strauss (2000) and Huntley (2006). In addition, the work of newcomers Fields *et al.* (2008) will be utilized.

Generational theory seeks to understand and characterize cohorts of people according to their membership of a generation, which is objectively assigned according to the year of birth. It is a dynamic, socio-cultural theoretical framework that employs a broad brush-stroke approach, rather than an individual focus. Hence, it features patterns and propensities across the generational group, rather than individuals. Generations and generational units are informally defined by demographers, the press and media, popular culture, market researchers and by members of the generation

themselves (Pendergast, 2007; Fields *et al.*, 2008). While members of the generation are alive, it is known as a living generation, and will continue to evolve and redefine itself, usually within bounds that are broadly predictable from the traits of the generation.

Generational theory is one way of investigating aspects of the tourism industry. Like other demographic lenses, it allows those in the field to consider possibilities utilizing a particular framework. As such, it is burdened by limitations and assumptions, many of which will become evident as this chapter unfolds.

The first of the challenges of adopting a generational perspective is that there is no absolute consensus as to the exact calendar years constituting each generation. The boundaries adopted in this chapter align relatively closely with many generational theorists, with 20–22 years being the typical generational range (see Table 1.1).

Generational theory is originally an American concept, but it is widely applicable to anglophones, that is, those who speak English natively or by adoption and have a cultural background associated with the English language, regardless of ethnic or geographical differences. With the effects of globalization and the permeation of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), especially access to the world wide web (WWW), the creep of anglophone influence and the monoculturalization of society means the number of people who can be included in the generational cohorts is increasing dramatically. Many professions with a global reach such as tourism utilize English as the main language for information dissemination, and this reinforces and facilitates the reach and effect of generational patterns and impacts (Fields *et al.*, 2008).

Table 1.1. A summary of living birth generations.

Birth years	Generation name	Age range in 2009
1901–1924	G1	85–108
1925–1942	Silent	67–84
1943–1960	Baby Boomer	49–66
1961–1981	Generation X	28–48
1982–2002	Generation Y	7–27
2003	Generation Z	6 or younger

Generational location, actuality and units

Several decades ago Mannheim (1952) developed the core tenets of generational theory, which remain both current and relevant today, including the concepts of generational location, generation as actuality and generation units. Each of these core tenets will be explained.

Generational location is a passive category based on the chronological span of time for the birth years of a cohort of individuals. This location will affect the potential of the generation. As Mannheim (1952, p.291) explains:

[B]elonging to the same generations or age group endows the individuals sharing in [it] with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limits them to a specific range of potential experiences, predisposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action.

Generational actuality moves from the passive location designation to consider the way a generation responds to ‘social changes and how these responses form the persona of the generation’ (Donnison, 2007, p. 4). The basic principle is that a cohort sharing a generational location also shares a set of experiences during their formative years, including a particular set of social and economic conditions. These shared experiences and conditions influence the generation collective in particular ways that in turn shape their thinking, values and beliefs, forming the generational persona. Extending this concept further, members of the same generation experience events while at similar life stages, with those events that occurred during the formative years having a particularly profound impact on the enduring characteristics – traits, values and beliefs – of the generation.

As detailed in Table 1.2, a typical lifespan and the social role associated with the values and belief systems goes through four phases – acquiring, testing, asserting and transferring.

Generation units are the subgroups within the generation timespan, which acknowledges variation within the typically 20–22-year generation location span. For example, Generation Y, the most recent generation completing its

Table 1.2. Four phases in life.

Phase of life	Ages	Social role
Childhood (formative years)	0–20	Growth: being nurtured, acquiring values and belief systems
Young adulthood	21–41	Vitality: testing values
Mid-adulthood	42–62	Power: asserting values, managing institutions
Elderhood	63–83	Leadership: transferring values, leading institutions

Generational location, actuality and units, which are integral components of the theory of generations, point to the idea of inter-generational differences, exemplified by the traits, values and belief systems of the various generations. Traits of generations are used to construct common patterns such as attitudes to work, political behaviours, consumer patterns, qualities in the workplace and family orientation. These traits, values and beliefs are defined by demographers, the press and media, popular culture, market researchers, sociologists and by members of the generation themselves (Howe, 2006; Huntley, 2006; Fields *et al.*, 2008).

birth cycle, is made up of three generation units: Generation Why (born 1982–1985); Millennials (MilGens; born 1985–1999); and iGeneration (born 1999–2002). Members of the Generation Why unit are on the cusp of the X Generation, so share some common traits with that generation, while members of the iGeneration are on the cusp of the Z generation, so are likely to exhibit some of the traits typical of that generation. Millennials are the central band of the Y-Generation cohort, so are likely to exhibit the character traits of that generation most compellingly.

Generation type: idealist, reactive, hero, artist

According to Howe and Strauss (2000), generations follow a repeating cycle, with four generational types typically following in the order of idealist, reactive, hero and artist. When the generational types are tracked across the life cycle, there are characteristics that appear consistently throughout successive generations based on this factor. These are outlined in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3. Characteristics of generational types. (Adapted from Strauss and Howe, 2000.)

Life-cycle type	Idealist (prophet)	Reactive (depressed/nomad)	Heroic	Artistic (adaptive)
<i>Childhood</i>				
Nurture received	Relaxed	Under-protected	Tightening	Overprotected
<i>Young adulthood</i>				
Style	Reflecting	Competing	Building	Remodelling
Nurture given	Tightening	Overprotective	Relaxed	Under-protective
<i>Mid-adulthood</i>				
Attitude	Judgemental	Exhausted	Energetic	Experimental
<i>Elderhood</i>				
How perceived	Wise, visionary	Persuasive	Busy, confident	Sensitive, flexible
Leadership style	Austere, safe	Pragmatic	Grand, inclusive	Pluralistic
Motto	Truth	Persuasion	Power	Love
Positive attributes	Principled, resolute	Savvy, practical, perceptive	Rational, competent	Caring, open-minded
Negative attributes	Selfish, arrogant, ruthless	Pecuniary, amoral	Overbold, insensitive, unreflective	Indecisive, guilt-ridden

Generations move as a collective through society, passing through the four phases of life, occupying different phases at different times and always maintaining their unique generational characteristics. Each generation acquires values and belief systems principally during the formative or childhood years of each generation. Table 1.4 provides a summary of the typical values and beliefs for selected generations, which also incorporates the features of the generational type.

In summary, generational theory brings together four main elements:

- Repeating trends based on generational type (idealist, reactive, heroic and artistic).
- Recognition that the formative years of childhood, where exposure to a range of factors occurs, determines the fundamental values and belief system of the generation.
- Recognition of the life-cycle stage (childhood, young adulthood, mid-adulthood and elder adulthood (elderhood)), and hence characteristics evident for the generational type at that stage.
- The relevant birth generation with its unique attributes at any given time (e.g. Baby Boomer, Generation X).

Current living generations

In order to gain the full benefit of generational theory, it is important to assemble the various elements together. Table 1.5 outlines the key features of the current major living generations.

Baby Boomers, already identified as an idealist or prophet generation, are entering elderhood. This cohort is regarded as being a 'driven' generation, with clear agendas and purpose. The civil rights movement is an example of the type of energy and direction a prophet generation might have. Members of the Baby-Boomer generation currently dominate many of the leadership positions in the tourism field, both in the private and public domains. Typically, policy makers currently setting and driving agendas are also Baby Boomers. Some of the older Baby Boomers are the grey nomad cohort often cited in the tourism literature. Members of this generation have typically spent their working lives developing and refining their expertise. They have a strong work ethic, believe in authority, are comparatively formal and accept authoritarian leadership and control. They are analytical and work well independently. They are prepared to wait in turn for promotions, which are often based on seniority.

Table 1.4. Differences between selected generations. (From Pendergast, 2009.)

Factors	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Generation Y
Beliefs and values	Work ethic, security	Variety, freedom	Lifestyle, fun
Motivations	Advancement, responsibility	Individuality	Self-discovery, relational
Decision making	Authority, brand loyalty	Experts, information, brand switchers	Friends, little brand loyalty
Earning and spending	Conservative, pay upfront	Credit savvy, confident, investors	Uncertain spenders, short-term wants, credit-dependent
Learning styles	Auditory, content-driven, monologue	Auditory or visual dialogue	Visual, kinaesthetic, multi-sensory
Marketing and communication	Mass	Descriptive, direct	Participative, viral, through friends
Training environment	Classroom style, formal, quiet atmosphere	Round-table style, planned, relaxed ambience	Unstructured, interactive
Management and leadership	Control, authority, analysers	Cooperation, competency, doers	Consensus, creativity, feelers

Table 1.5. Current cyclic location and characteristics of generations.

Generation	Current phase of life	Social role	Stage of cycle
Silent	Elderhood	Leadership: transferring values, leading institutions	Artistic
Baby Boomer	Elderhood	Leadership: transferring values, leading institutions	Idealist
Generation X	Midlife	Power: asserting values, managing institutions	Reactive
Generation Y	Young adulthood	Vitality: testing values	Hero
Generation Z	Childhood	Growth: being nurtured, acquiring values and belief systems	Artistic

The nomad or reactive generation always follows the idealist generation, and is typified as extremely cynical and often depressed. It is a response to the energy and enthusiasm of the previous prophet generation. Generation X is the current living nomad generation, and hence is regarded as pessimistic and depressed. Members of Generation X are in the midlife phase of their life cycle. They are entering the power phase, and frequently can be found in management roles in the workforce. The older of the X Generation are moving into leadership positions. Ironically, this generation is also known as the Baby Bust generation, and there is a proportionately smaller number of Generation X compared to the previous Baby Boomer generation. Members of the X Generation are also typically experts in their fields, but differ from Baby Boomers in that they see cooperative leadership and teams as desirable work practices.

The next in the cycle is the hero generation. Currently, Y Generation members are the hero generation. They are characterized as conventional and committed, with respect for authority and with civic pride. The hero generation usually produces some key influential international leaders. Y-Generation heroes are team-oriented, have a focus on how they feel and experience events and workplaces. They are expert novices – good at learning new things – which has direct consequences for workplace training and professional development models. They are collaborative and interactive, and believe in performance and merit, not seniority, which is often at odds with the values of both the

X-Generation and Baby-Boomer managers and leaders with assumed seniority and expertise over Y-Generation members.

The generation following the hero generation is the artists, a generation that is regarded as emotional and indecisive, and at the opposite end of the continuum from the hero generation in terms of leadership and initiative.

All of these elements of generational theory, like other forms of supposition and speculative analytic tools, provide a particular way of reflecting on the past, and if harnessed effectively, of providing possible insights and directions for the future. This chapter now turns to the focus of the book – exploring the Y generation.

Y Generation

Generational theory has much to offer to those wanting a foundational understanding of the young people in our society, who are entering the workforce and who are the new visitors in the tourism market. This cohort is in the young adulthood phase of life, with the social role of vitality and testing of values. Drawing on a wide range of theorists in the field such as Howe and Strauss (2000), Huntley (2006) and Fields *et al.* (2008), it is possible to establish some consistently articulated characteristics of the generation. It is a hero generation, with a focus on brands, friends, fun and digital culture. Members of the Y Generation are confident and relaxed, conservative and the most educated generation ever. They have been

sheltered, but have had high expectations placed on them, they are special and safety is paramount. They are impatient and self-focused, yet value teams and collaboration. They are multitaskers who are networked rather than individually focused, hence are strongly influenced by friends and peers. All these characteristics are generated from the interplay between the social and economic context during the formative years of the generation, coupled with the effects of the older generations providing nurturing and care, developing policies and community practices, shaping the character traits of the Y Generation. The effect, as Fields *et al.* (2008, p. 2) note, is that 'Gen Y, as a group, has tremendous influence in our culture, with a powerful impact on the workplace' and they are increasingly portrayed as being a 'cultural phenomenon'. This identification of Generation Y as representing a major generational shift is the product of generational shaping, which is regarded as profound when compared to any previous generation in human history. The reason for this is now explained.

Societal context shaping the Y Generation

Since the early 1980s, we have witnessed a major paradigm shift in society that has aligned with the formative and hence values-acquisition years of our most recent full birth generation – the Y generation (Huntley, 2006). The last 25–30 years have been an era of unprecedented transition from industrial to information-based culture and economy, from print-based to multi-mediated, digital approaches to communication effects of ICTs, globalization and the emergence of the digital native. The simultaneous alignment of Generation Y and The Information Age has had an enormous impact, creating a larger than usual generation gap – or values and character-trait difference – between previous generations and the Y Generation, a gap accentuated by what is now recognized as the most significant shift in our society to date, when compared to similar but smaller shifts occurring with the introduction of the printing press in the 15th century, and before that alphabetic literacy in 4th century (Pendergast,

2007). This is the reason why Y-Generational work is so important. It is critical that the gap between X and Y Generation does not become a chasm, serving to separate the generations in society. This imperative has been identified by the United Nations (2005, p. 2) and is evident in the comment:

there is a simple but often ignored fact: young people today are different from any of the previous generations of youth. It is essential to ensure that youth interventions are relevant and valid for the current young generation in society and not mired in the realities of times past.

Y Generation is the first generation born into The Information Age, and for this reason members are known as digital natives (Prensky, 2006). Everyone alive today whose birth precedes the Y Generation is known as a digital immigrant. Digital natives are characterized as: operating at twitch speed (not conventional speed); employing random access (not step-by-step); parallel processing (not linear processing); graphics first (not text); play-oriented (not work); connected (not stand-alone). They get more screen time (TV, computer) than fresh air. Consider the following:

- 97% of Australian Y-Generation students have access to computers at home, including 82% of indigenous students.
- 87% of Australian students use a computer at home on a frequent basis.
- 74% of students use the Internet frequently as a tool for finding information and almost 70% for communication.
- Socio-economic background does not have a great effect on use of computers or confidence (Thomson and De Bortoli, 2007).

These young people are members of the Y Generation and their native comfort level with ICTs ensures they connect with the digital world through play, enjoyment and desire, rather than as a necessary requirement of work, as is the case for most Baby-Boomer and Generation-X digital immigrants. A flow-on effect of this digital lifestyle is evident in marketing and communication, with a shift across the generations from mass marketing and communication that appeals and is effective for the Baby Boomer generation, through to direct

marketing for Generation X; and then to viral, participative, interactive and networked for Y-Generation members. This means that others' opinions – in particular the opinions of their friends – is highly valued by Generation-Y members. In this case, the meaning of 'friends' also differs for generations, with Baby Boomers and X-Generation members classifying friends in quite different ways. For the Y Generation, a friend is a member of a network and may be relatively unknown to the individual, while for previous generations a friend is more likely to be a person you feel comfortable meeting for coffee. This points to the removal of geographical boundaries for the Y Generation. Digital technology facilitates the end of enclosure based on proximity, making the new neighbourhood of the Y Generation the global digital community. The world is literally the playground for this generation.

This loss of boundaries and enclosure refers also to the sharing of knowledge and information, with access through channels such as the world wide web available to all who have network access and basic search skills. Knowledge is no longer confined to professionals with years of education and the development of detailed knowledge, as was the case prior to era of digital natives. Wikipedia, the free multilingual encyclopedia written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, is often the starting point for Y-Generation natives, along with their X- and Baby Boomer and prior-generation immigrants, to commence gathering information on any topic under investigation. This results in a flattening of the value of expert knowledge, which in past generations was typically acquired over a lifetime and led to the positioning of those individuals as the powerful leaders in society.

The digital character of members of the Y Generation has led to the proliferation of digital tools. For instance, a recent American study of more than 7000 Y-Generation members found that 97% own a computer and 94% own a mobile phone (Reynol and Mastrodicasa, 2007).

In terms of their computer use, the following example demonstrates some typical patterns. The social-networking website Facebook, launched in early 2004, has the following features:

- More than 150 million active users, approximately 45% males and 55% females.
- The largest demographic is the 18–25-year-old group.
- The average user has 100 friends on the site.
- More than 3 billion minutes are spent on Facebook each day (worldwide).
- More than 13 million users update their status at least once each day.
- More than 800 million photos and 5 million videos are uploaded to the site each month.
- More than 20 million active user groups exist on the site. (<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>)

These statistics corroborate the Y-Generation digital traits of being connected, play-oriented and graphics first explicitly (Fields *et al.*, 2008). In a study of millennial students, McMahon and Pospisil (2005) monitored their use of technology in both education and social settings, characterizing them as having:

- Information connectedness – the need for rapid access to information.
- Multitasking – the ability to manage multiple aspects of their lives at once.
- A focus on immediacy – an intolerance for delays.

Generation Y is also the first generation born into the 'age of terrorism'. As global citizens they have been shaped as a cohort unlike any previous generation in this domain. This is a combination of both timing – the series of terrorism events that has occurred during their formative years has happened when their values and belief systems are being shaped as a collective; and exposure – ICTs have the capacity to expose large numbers of people to almost instant news of terrorism and other events. The most profound of these to date, and now recognized as a marker between Generation X and Generation Y, are the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA. In these attacks in New York on the World Trade Centre twin tower landmark buildings, and in Washington, DC, on the Pentagon, using civilian aircraft hijacked by the terrorists, the total number of victims is recorded as

2998, the overwhelming majority of whom were civilians, including nationals from over 80 different countries. Many people across the world watched in shock, horror and amazement as the events unfolded, and were telecast live on their television screens as a spectacular form of infotainment. This medium gives the viewer a sense of being live on site, involved in the action of an event as it unfolds. The sharing of information is and often neither edited nor refined, and often taken from a range of angles, facilitating the viewer to experience the event in a more informed way than many of those actually involved.

It is not surprising that a recent study of teenaged members of the Y Generation (13–17 years old in 2006) conducted by the New Politics Institute (2006) found that these young people are ‘particularly concerned with security issues such as crime and terrorism’ and they seem to be ‘strikingly shaped’ by such experiences during their formative years. In creating fear, terrorist events are often of an incredulous nature, such as the indiscriminate and random targeting of civilians including children in public places. This reinforces the difficulty of avoiding terrorist incidents, as one can simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Terrorism events and their viral dissemination using digital tools have resulted in a strong safety net being thrown around the Y Generation. With this sheltered background, the management and policing of the ‘risk’ society (Beck, 1992) is a prevailing characteristic of the generation.

Financially, the generations differ in their behaviours resulting from the societal trends in their community. Y-Generation members are credit-dependent, and often financially dependent on parents and others much later in life than was typical for previous generations. For this reason they have been nicknamed the ‘helicopter kids’ because they hover about the family home (Salt, 2006). This compares to Baby Boomers who are collectively regarded as being conservative spenders and a generation with a ‘pay upfront’ approach. This contrasts starkly with the Y Generation, who are uncertain spenders, with short-term wants, who are likely to rely on credit. They also have many more temptations to spend money and the desire and need to constantly update technol-

ogy tools to remain at the edge of their potential dominates many consumer behaviours. The global financial crisis of 2008 is impacting on the Y Generation at a time they are making their entry into the workforce. Predictions of job losses, business closure, credit tightening and house-price slumps mark a shift from an era of stable, robust and confident economic times to a more uncertain financial future.

When these impacts are taken together, there is an emphasis on immediacy, short-term satisfaction, risk, safety and communication for Generation Y. It is therefore not surprising that values for this generation reflect the need for safety and security, and a certain confidence and set of capabilities given their capacities with ICTs. Frequent change and technological progress are the comforting realities for the Y Generation, yet the same environment provides unsettling challenges for those generations before them.

While the key societal events shaping the Y Generation are yet to be confirmed, it is likely to include the following factors that significantly impacted on them during their formative years:

- The digital revolution, such as the Internet, WWW, e-mail, chatlines, blogs, short message service (SMS) and texting (the information age).
- Terrorism, such as the World Trade Center attacks (the age of terrorism).
- Financial uncertainty.

Demography of Y Gen

The features of the Y Generation have been detailed by a number of historians including Neil Howe and William Strauss (2000), whose work has informed much of the thinking in this chapter. Their work has been described as ‘brilliant’, ‘applicable to everyone around the world’ and ‘enlightening’. It is widely used in marketing and communication fields, in product development, in higher education and in the media as a way of targeting defined populations. It has been used by professions and professional association researchers to predict membership and to develop strategic directions to target, engage and retain selected generations (cf. Brooks,

2006, 2008). Much of the information that follows draws directly or indirectly from their extensive work, and from those who have also used their theoretical perspective as a foundation for their own purposes.

Generation Y is the first generation born into a society that features international interdependence and global engagement. It has the technological capability and personal capacity to participate virtually as global community members and, generally speaking, regards itself as a participant of a global community to an extent unprecedented in generational traits. For this reason, a global perspective is the demographic platform for building a profile of Generation Y (Fields *et al.*, 2008).

In 1982, the first birth year of the millennium generation, the world population was 4,608,724,252, and in 2002, the last of the birth years of the Y Generation, the world population was 6,246,193,906, an increase of 1,638,469,654 (United States Census Bureau, 2006). In 1982, Australia's population was 15,184,200. In 2002, at the birth end of the Y Generation, it had grown to 19,662,800, an increase of over 4 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2004). While the difference does not constitute the number of births that also include migration and is impacted upon by a longer life expectancy, clearly there is a large number of the Y Generation cohort born in the world – the United Nations has estimated as many as 1.8 billion (United Nations, 2005).

The United States Census Bureau (2006) predicts that part-way during their lifetime, members of the Y Generation will see in 2050 the world population rise to 9,536,111,257. This means that the first born of the Y Generation will, at age 68 and well before their life expectancy of 83 for females and 78 for males is reached, experience more than a doubling of the world population. However, the share of young people in the world's total population is gradually declining – the increase in world population is significantly attributable to increased health care and longer life expectancy, increasing the median age, rather than an increased birth rate. For example, in 2000, the median age of the Australian population was 35 years of age. It is projected to gradually increase to 44.6 years of age by the year 2050 (ABS, 2006). This pattern has intergenerational con-

sequences, and the Y Generation is the first generation that will be impacted significantly by these events.

The unique character of the Y Generation

When the societal context and the demography of the generation are taken together, along with the patterns and behaviours that are predicted from the cyclical nature of generations, core traits have been formulated to represent the Y Generation. For this chapter, those developed by Howe (2006) will be utilized.

According to Howe (2006), there are seven core traits typifying the Y Generation. As a collective, they are:

1. Special.
2. Sheltered.
3. Confident.
4. Team-oriented.
5. Conventional.
6. Pressured.
7. Achieving.

Each trait will now be considered in turn.

Special

Y-Generation members regard themselves as special because of their digital capabilities and their membership of comparatively smaller family units. They are also considered by parents to be special because they typically belong to families with fewer children. Many Y-Generation children were planned, with the benefit of birth-control facilities. Individual Y-Generation members are often assigned high expectations and have been exposed to an environment where behaviour management has shifted from punitive to positive reinforcement in environments, such as schools.

Sheltered

Members of the Y Generation are protected by parents and wider community. This is evidenced through policy initiatives such as the mandatory wearing of bike helmets and seat belts, pool fencing and other initiatives that focus on the health and well-being of young people. While these laws apply across the generations, they

have been introduced during the formative years of the Y Generation, naturalizing them for this cohort. As a generation they are particularly concerned with security issues such as crime and terrorism and school violence. Terms such as the 'cotton-wool generation' have been used to characterize this trait and to question whether they are overprotected. Generation Y often stay at home longer than members of previous generations have, mostly out of financial necessity. Regardless, this places them under the watchful eye of carers or parents and extends the dependency relationship.

Confident

They accept uncertainty and have experienced to this point a generally sound economic base, and hence a high level of confidence and optimism prevails. Recent economic changes have failed to impact on this confidence level and indeed confirm for Y-Generation members that the only certain thing is uncertainty.

Team-oriented

Experiences in their early years are more likely to predispose this generation to team activities when compared to other generations, examples include organized sports, opportunities for volunteerism, experiencing formal childcare, a focus on group work as a pedagogical strategy in schools and the like contribute to this character trait. Many schooling practices reinforce the value of teams and collaborative practices, impacting particularly during the formative years to consolidate this generational trait. That is not to say that members of Generation Y are effective team members – they still require skill development in this field.

Conventional

Members of the Y Generation cohort are regarded as having relatively conventional aspirations centred on career, work–life balance and citizenship. This is a response to the previous generations who have often committed excessively to achieve positive work outcomes at the expense of family balance (O'Reilly, 2000). They do not want these patterns repeated for themselves.

Pressured

Members of the Y Generation are regarded as being pressured, with formalized activities filling many hours of their days. Many have experienced busy social, school and after-school-care calendars, regardless of their socioeconomic profile.

Achieving

This is the most education-minded generation that has lived. Much emphasis is placed on the relationship between education and success. Facilitating this education-mindedness are changes to the traditional school curriculum, with the inclusion of vocational and training possibilities in schooling culture. This trend started in the 1980s, which was a period of profound change in the nature and purpose of secondary schools in Australia. This was largely the result of declining youth-labour markets, combined with changes to student financial support. This is dramatically demonstrated by the national retention rate to year 12, which rose from 35% in 1980 to 77% by 1992 (Fullarton, 2001). Coupled with this trait is the vehicle for achieving higher education standards – typically an extended dependency on family support.

While these seven traits, based on the propositions of Howe (2006), have been utilized in this chapter, it is important to note that there is not a definitive list of character traits agreed to by generational theorists. The traits emerge over time, and are shaped by events and by time itself. Herein lies another of the challenges associated with the utilization of generational theory. Nevertheless, there is a growing interest in the use of generational theory with a focus on Generation Y as the succession generation entering the tourism workforce and as tourists now and in the future. So, what lessons might be learned by employing generational perspectives?

Y Generation and Tourism

The tourism industry has recently demonstrated a commitment to better understand generational differences to ensure both a strong workforce and a strong tourism market.

Y Generation as visitors

A recent study by the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation (WYSETC) of more than 8500 Y-Generation travellers, for example, revealed the following key features about these travellers. They are: travelling more often; exploring more destinations; spending more on travel; booking more over the Internet; hungry for experience; hungry for information; intrepid travellers; and getting a lot out of their travel (Richards, 2007).

Table 1.6 provides an elaboration of each of these features, and makes connections with the seven character traits of the Y Generation.

In essence, Richards captures the spirit of the Y Generation in this statement: 'Travel is a way of life. A certain level of risk is part of travel, even though it can be minimised

through careful planning' (Richards, 2007, p. 4). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) notes: 'The unique motivations of young travellers makes this niche market extremely important to the key objectives of the global tourism agenda' (WTO, 2008, p. i). Y-Generation travellers generate an estimated €109 billion annually (Richards, 2007), providing a strong impetus for Baby Boomer and Generation-X tourism owners and operators to understand the unique characteristics of these customers and potential members of the workforce, and to adapt practices and culture appropriately.

Y Generation in the workforce

With respect to the Y-Generation tourism workforce, Table 1.7 presents a collation of general population percentages for each generation

Table 1.6. Y-Generation travellers mapped against generational traits.

Features	Explanation of feature	Mapping against generational trait
Travelling more often	Average number of trips taken has increased in the last 5 years	Confident Pressured
Exploring more destinations	Take more trips outside the local region and explore new areas of the world	Achieving Confident
Spending more on travel	As a proportion of their income, spend more than any other group on international travel	Confident
Booking more over the Internet	Early adopters of new travel technology	Confident Special
Experience hungry	Want a range of different experiences often involving everyday life and culture of places visited, including contact with local people	Team-oriented
Information hungry	Consult a greater number of information sources to plan trips	Achieving Pressured Achieving
Intrepid travellers	Are not deterred by problems such as terrorism, natural disasters and epidemics – mitigate these risks through information	Confident Sheltered
Getting a lot out of their travel	Travel makes them want to travel more, serving as a stimulus to learn and develop, including developing greater cultural understanding	Achieving Conventional Team-oriented

Table 1.7. Generational patterns in the general work population. (From Brooks, 2006.)

	Current population (%)	Working-age adults (%)
GI	3	0
Silent	14	8
Baby Boomer	27	42
Generation X	15	24
Generation Y	41	26

and also the percentage in the workforce. These are American data, but provide a generally repeating pattern of the relative balance between the generations.

There is a growing corpus of theory on the work practices, values and motivators of the Y Generation (cf. Fields *et al.*, 2008). Boomer (2007) regards one of the priorities for attracting and retaining Y-Generational members to be embracing a 'training and learning culture' within the profession. The top three motivators for MilGens are:

1. Meaningful work that makes a difference to the world.
2. Working with committed co-workers who share their values.
3. Meeting their personal goals (Allen, 2004).

MilGens expect to be promoted quickly, to change jobs frequently, are motivated by training and education opportunities, respect leadership, expect flexibility and good working relationships. They promptly disengage if they are dissatisfied with their work situation (Salt, 2006). Long-term loyalty to one employer can carry a 'reverse stigma' for MilGens, the message being they are out of date and lacking in diverse experience (Robert, 2005).

In Table 1.8, key workplace generational traits and motivators are used to provide a basis for suggested strategies for attracting and retaining Y-Generation members in the tourism industry. This is not an exhaustive list, but a sample of the kind of possibilities that must be canvassed to make the profession viable for the MilGen to consider.

Table 1.8. Y-Generation values and motivators with workplace strategies. (From Pendergast, 2009.)

MilGen work values and motivators	Suggested strategies
Flexibility	Expectations of flexible working hours, job sharing, telecommuting Opportunity for part-time commitments to individual projects Conduct meetings, conferences and events during work days Provide virtual meeting opportunities, e.g. Skype and MSN
Networking and communicating	Utilize the latest available communications technologies such as web-based discussion forums, SMS and iPods Introduce an e-journal and other forms of e-communication as the professional 'face' of tourism peak bodies and associations Respond to communications quickly
Mentoring	Establish mentoring models that focus on individual development Use the timespan of 5 years for career planning
Ethics	Provide opportunities for individuals to make a difference – real capacity to action dreams Have high levels of morality and ethical standards
Education – lifelong learner and personal growth	Provide self-guided online workshops and the like Establish a training and learning culture
Authentic experiences	Connect theory with practice and ensure a global perspective Provide incentives that align with the real world Prioritize personal and family health and well-being
Collaborative teams	Use collaborative teaming as a basis for work tasks and structure these into projects Provide resources based on collaborative teams Facilitate leadership at team level Conduct collaborative teaming training programmes

Continued

Table 1.8. Continued.

MilGen work values and motivators	Suggested strategies
Instant results	Shift from function-based work to project-based work. This might mean restructuring committees and the like away from function to specific tasks Provide recognition and increased responsibility for results well received
Entrepreneurial	Provide opportunities for creativity and challenge – roles must be seen as important and as being valued Encourage members to make their own opportunities for advancement Provide a reward-for-performance system. This can mean that those teams that are performing should be resourced, while those that are underperforming should receive no support Additional responsibilities are welcomed as they are seen as a chance to aggregate new skills
Balance work and family	Unlike Baby Boomer and Generation X, family comes first, so workplaces need to be family friendly, e.g. provision of childcare facilities and a tolerant attitude to children Conferences and meetings should include family and provide childcare Programmes established that are geared towards health of Generation Y and their families
Multiple pathways: non-linear thinkers	Will be seeking opportunities to diversify Looking for opportunities to move in non-linear pathway
Technologically savvy	Access to information must be immediate and 24/7 Internet is a main interface for communication

Conclusions

The WTO (2008, p. 73) concluded its recent report *Youth Travel Matters: Understanding the Global Phenomenon of Youth Travel* by emphasizing that youth and student travel is ‘a major component of global tourism and a positive influence on the personal and social development of young people’. At the same time, the WTO recognized that student and youth travel is ‘a unique market that must be understood for its specialist needs’.

This chapter approached an understanding of youth and travel through generational theory, positioning Y Generation in relation to other generational cohorts by age, shared social, economic and historical influences, and unique character traits of members. Generation Y members are identified as a hero generation, characterized as conventional and committed, with respect for authority and with civic pride. They are team-orientated, technically savvy and focus on how they feel and

experience events and workplaces. These characteristics are important to understand, both for the Y Generation as global tourists and as workers within the tourism industry. The following chapters expand these roles for the Y Generation.

Members of Y Generation are currently in the young adulthood phase of life, with the social role of vitality and testing of values. They are a cohort with a focus on brands, friends, fun and digital culture. They are also confident and relaxed, conservative and the most-educated generation ever. It is well accepted that the process of generational shaping has impacted the Y Generation in profound ways. They are the first generation of digital natives and the first cohort dealing with the age of terrorism in their formative years. Financially, Y-Generation members are credit-dependent and often financially dependent on parents and others much later in life than was typical for previous generations. The current global financial crisis will present

a challenging time for them as travel consumers, though ironically there is anecdotal evidence that this generational group still prioritizes international travel above owning property, domestic travel and owning a car (TravelMole, 2008).

As the following chapters of this book reveal, tourism for the Y Generation is quite often a mixture of business and pleasure. For

example, the WTO (2008) notes that 70% of all trips taken by young people are motivated by goals such as desire to explore, work or study abroad. Mapping Y-Generation travel and work characteristics against theoretical frameworks, such as that provided by Howe (2006), allows a greater understanding of this unique generation and ways to fully engage them within the tourism industry.

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