

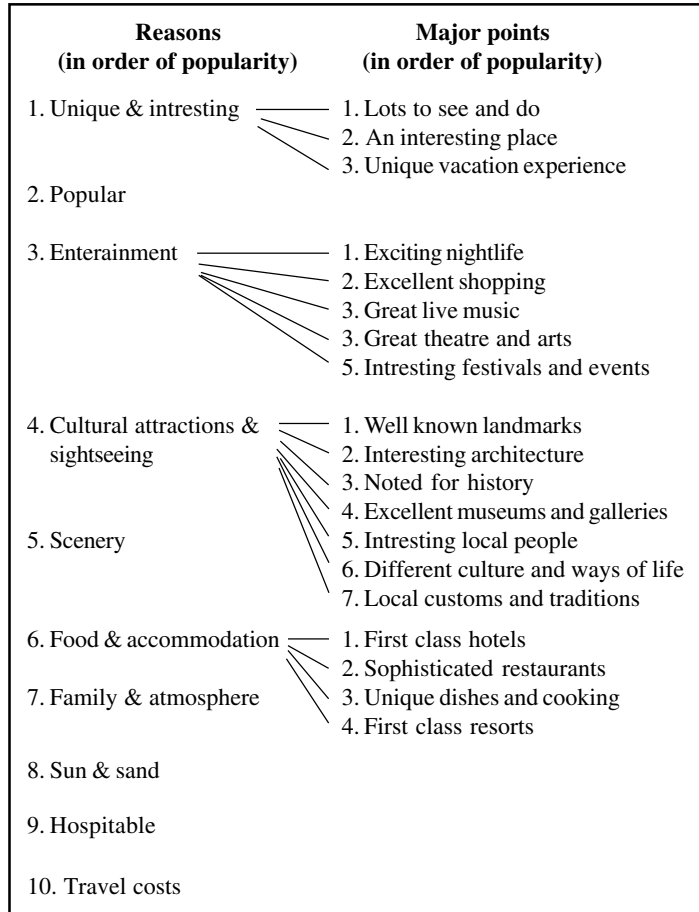


## Urban Heritage Tourism

- The UK currently receives the 5<sup>th</sup> largest number of foreign visitors in the world each year.
- About 60% of these visitors list **culture and heritage** as a main reason for their visit.
- Residents of the UK also spent over £300 million in 2002, visiting historic and heritage sites in their home country.
- The tourist industry in the UK provides jobs for 7.4% of its workers.
- Tourism is thus a thriving industry in the UK and recently there has been an upsurge in the number of urban heritage sites hoping to attract large numbers of these tourists.

For many years, cities such as Chester, York and Bath, with their many old buildings and great historical interest, have acted as powerful magnets to tourists. However, the late 1970s saw the development of a new type of urban tourism in the UK, which was closely linked to day trips and short-break holidays. This 'urban heritage tourism' was focussed on a wider range of buildings and features linked with the past in our cities. It included old industrial sites such as factories, canals, docks, housing etc. as well as ancient castles and cathedrals and is closely linked to urban regeneration strategies. As Fig 1 shows there are a wide range of reasons why people want to visit urban areas.

Fig 1. Why people might visit urban areas for tourism



### Reasons for the recent growth of Urban Heritage Tourism

- The Local authorities of Liverpool, Bradford, Manchester, Wigan, etc. realised that there was a market for urban tourism. They saw it as a way of improving the local economy to counteract the effects of **deindustrialisation**. Tourist activities have been an important part or urban regeneration schemes in many of these Victorian, industrial towns and cities. Jobs were created and money was brought into the area, causing revitalisation.
- Many of the towns and cities have been able to obtain financial assistance for such schemes. The Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative invests about £18 million in such projects. Since 1993, Urban Splash has invested over £100 million in integrated regeneration schemes in Manchester and Liverpool creating over one million square feet of commercial and residential space. Often money from public sources encourages private investment. Recently a £1.5 million grant attracted a further £20.5 million, which was spent on conservation work. Some of the new large attractions such as Tate Modern, London (£150 million), Lowry Centre, Salford (£96 million) have been very successful, others like Millenium Point, Birmingham (£113 million) lie in the balance, yet others such as the Museum of Pop Culture in Sheffield have closed - an enormous waste of tax payers money.
- Local authorities also saw the rejuvenation of their older industrial areas and brown-field sites as a way of bringing back people to the town centre. This helped to reverse the trend of urban decentralisation, which had involved the development of urban fringes with new features such as out-of-town retail parks etc. There has also been a reversal of the out-migration of the middle classes, especially young professional singles and couples, as they return to the inner city to live in fashionable, new residential areas made from converted warehouses etc. They contribute to the revival of urban areas as 24 hour entertainment centres.
- There were many old, derelict or disused factories and other buildings, coal-mines etc. which could be renovated and developed at relatively low cost to become tourist attractions, many of outstanding architectural merit.
- The ageing of the population of the UK and potential for earlier retirement ages for some has meant that there is an increased number of people in the older age groups who enjoy taking nostalgic day-trips or short break holidays to see features that were part of their childhood. Fuelled by the media, there has been a change in UK tourism consumption patterns, with a growth of heritage tourism at the **expense** of coastal resort tourism.
- Changes in the teaching of history have resulted in a 'hands-on' approach where pupils are expected to experience life in the past. Many school parties visit these attractions as part of their studies of life in the UK in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- There is now more media coverage of historical topics and issues, which increases knowledge of, and demand for, urban heritage attractions. In a recent poll in 2003 30% more people regularly watched TV programmes about history or archaeology than visited the cinema. Most urban universities have capitalised on this by offering holiday courses and utilising student accomodation 52 weeks a year.
- Many urban hotels are often full of business visitors on weekdays but relatively empty at weekends. Short break holidays to the city thus provide added business for them at their 'off-peak' times and they are willing to offer 'special deals', marketed at the last minute on the internet.
- The need to cater for the huge market of diverse hobbies, with themed events and special weekends such as Food Festivals, or Heritage Transport Days.

**Measuring Urban Tourism**

There can be several problems with obtaining accurate data for urban tourism as often visits to towns and cities are multi-purpose, e.g. a family may go to a museum but also go shopping as well. Also over the past three years there have been four factors that have created ‘unreliable figures’:

- The ‘foot and mouth outbreak’ of 2001 restricted the numbers of visitors to rural areas (see Fig 2) and some of these may have visited urban attractions as an alternative, increasing their visitor numbers.
- The September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist incident in the USA, resulted in a dramatic fall in numbers of Americans wishing to travel abroad by air. As many of these visitors came to towns and cities in the UK visitor numbers dropped considerably and have only started to recover in recent months.
- The introduction of free admission to many museums increased visitor numbers to them. Numbers visiting the Science Museum in London increased by 94% in 2002, whilst the Victoria and Albert Museum had 84% more visitors and the Natural History Museum an increase of 74%. As many of these are located in towns and cities urban tourism as a whole benefited. It will be interesting to see whether or not these attractions will be re-visited or if numbers will fall again.
- The Golden Jubilee celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II also increased visitor numbers, particularly to places with royal connections and London in particular.

**Fig 2. The effects of foot and mouth outbreak of 2001 on visitor numbers**

Type of attraction	Percentage decrease in visitor numbers in 2001
Country parks	↓10%
Farm visits	↓20%
Wildlife attractions	↓5%
Historical properties	↓6%

**Exam Hint:** It is always important to be aware of the problems involved when using data on topics such as tourism, which are quite complex and influenced by many external factors.

The case studies which follow emphasise the variety that urban heritage tourism can offer.

**Case Study 1 Bradford, Yorkshire**

In 1800, Bradford was a small market town of 16000. Local people carried out wool spinning and cloth weaving in small cottages and farms. Industrial growth brought about by the Industrial Revolution led to the rapid growth of the city over the next fifty years. By 1850 there were over 100 wool mills in the borough. Bradford had become the ‘wool capital’ of the world with a population of around 100,000 and the town centre expanded rapidly. Many of the old buildings were replaced and large public buildings were built, funded by wealthy industrialists, in an ornate Victorian style.

After the decline of the UK’s woollen industry Bradford struggled to replace its closing factories. However, in the last 20 years the traditional woollen industry has become the focus of a local Heritage Industry and given the town a new lease of life. The Bradford District covers an area of almost 150 square miles of which 60% is open countryside and moorland containing attractive settlements. There is thus a variety of other attractions for visitors to the area to enjoy, such as

- The Industrial museum– an original worsted spinning mill complex built in 1875 now used to recreate life in Bradford in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with shire horses at work, a mill owner’s house and back to back cottages.
- The Alhambra Theatre, one of Britain’s best-preserved Edwardian theatres, which has recently been refurbished.
- Saltaire: a village 3.5 miles to the north of the town containing one of the first big mills to take advantage of British dominance in world trade in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The new mill integrated on one site all of the many processes of the worsted trade which had gradually been mechanised one by one over the previous 50 years. In 1853, Saltaire village, the largest and most complete industrial village of that time, was opened. Titus Salt had built this settlement for the mill workers to try to solve the problems raised by uncontrolled and unplanned industrialism and urbanism at that time. He provided 800 well-planned houses with facilities for modern sanitation and utilities, churches, an institute hospital, school and a park for the residents. Visitors to Saltaire can experience the life style of workers in the nineteenth century.

The mill itself, no longer operational, houses the largest collection in the world of the works of Bradford born artist David Hockney. In December 2001, Saltaire was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Similar settlements were built by other great industrialists for their workers, e.g. Port Sunlight near Liverpool and Bournville near Birmingham.

- Haworth, with its famous parsonage, birthplace of the Bronte sisters, is nearby as an added attraction for the visitors.
- Other attractions are the Keighley and Worth valley railway with its old steam trains, trips by waterbus along the network of Victorian canals, local festivals and events. There are also over 4400 listed buildings in the area.
- New attractions have also been introduced. In 1983 the National Museum of Photography, Film and TV, created in association with the Science Museum in London, was created in Bradford.

Bradford has been very forward thinking in exploiting its ethnic diversity as a tourist attraction, with the famous gastronomic curry trail and the recent proposal to establish a spice market - developed by the Eden Project Group.

The tourist industry now attracts 8 million visitors to Bradford and District each year and is thus of major importance to the present-day economy of the city. Over 10,000 people are employed in tourism- related jobs. Bradford has the great advantage of a real mix of tourist attractions

The recent growth in income from tourism in the city can be seen in Fig 3. Around 80% of this income comes from the low expenditure day visitor sector, compared to Yorkshire as a whole, with a figure of 60%. Bradford is seen as band leader for Urban Heritage Tourism and an encouragement to many other Northern Industrial towns to go for it.

**Fig 3. Income from tourism in Bradford 1997 - 2000**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000
Tourist income (£ million )	255	270	298	409

**Case Study: Albert Docks In Liverpool**

This is a highly successful example of the redevelopment of a declining inner city area into one of urban heritage tourism, which has also acted as a focus for further urban regeneration. Nearly 22,000 jobs are now found in the tourism sector on Merseyside, a total of nearly 5% of those in the area. Almost 13 million people visited Merseyside attractions in 2001.

**Fig 4. Leading 12 tourist attractions in Liverpool**

Attraction	Number of Visitors (in thousands)	Admission
Albert Dock	4,000	Free
Staley Dock Heritage Market	2,600	Free
Mersey Ferries	701	Paid
Tate Gallery Liverpool	616	Free
Two Liverpool cathedrals	391	Free
Empire Theatre	383	Paid
Liverpool Museum	231	Paid
Merseyside Maritime Museum	230	Paid
Voirrey Embroidery Centre	150	Paid
Royal Court Theatre	149	Paid
Beatles Story	135	Paid
Museum of Liverpool life	121	Paid

The original Albert Dock was opened in Liverpool in 1846 by Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. An area of 7 acres was developed consisting of large docks and warehouses to store imports from the many countries of the British Empire such as tea, silk and tobacco. By the end of the nineteenth century these facilities had become outdated due to changes in the types and sizes of ships. Some port activities continued here but when the docks finally closed in 1972 the area and buildings had become almost derelict.

After the Toxteth riots in 1981 a large-scale programme of urban regeneration was started in Liverpool and with government support and funding the Merseyside Development Corporation was founded. One of the MDCs main aims was to renovate the docklands area. The Albert Dock Company was established and around £100 million from private and public sources, including money from the European Regional Development Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the local authority was used to regenerate the area.

Over 1.25 million square feet of floor space has now been renovated to provide a wide range of tourist attractions based on Liverpool's heritage including:

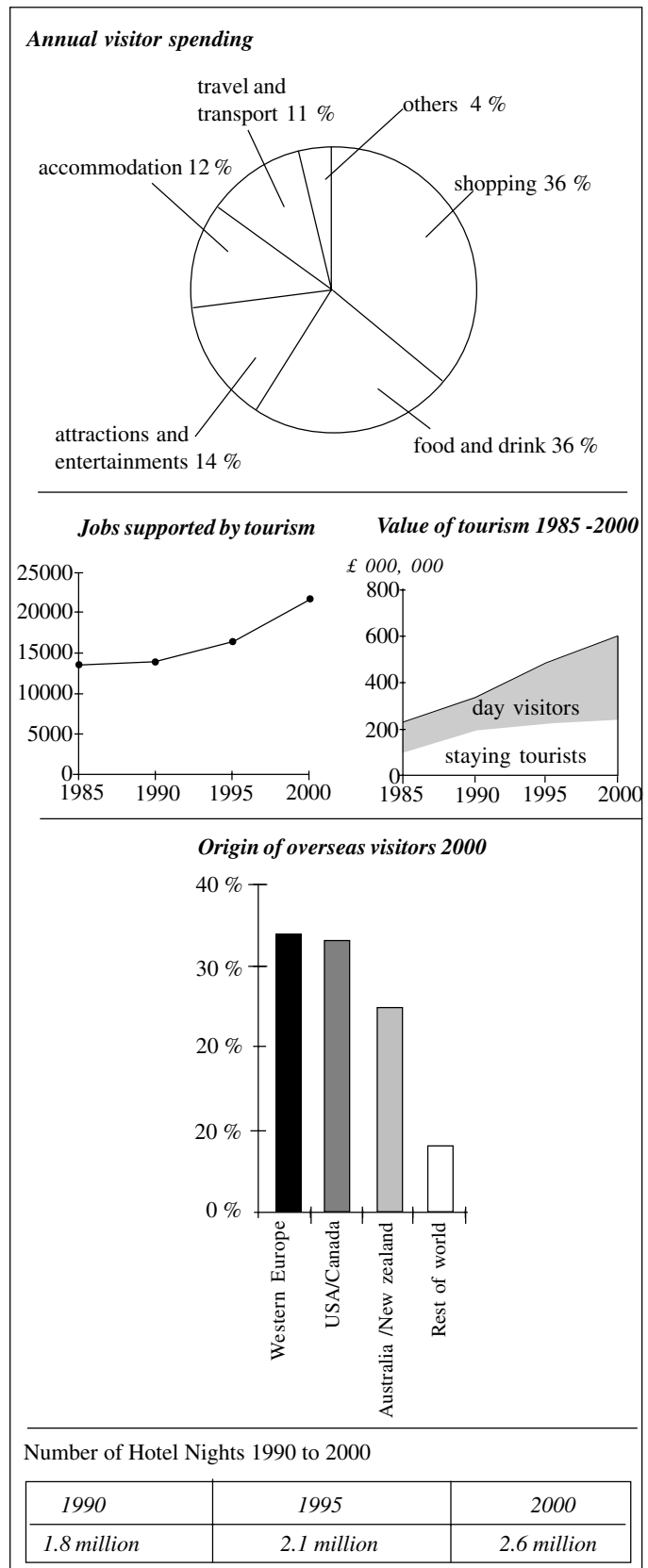
- The art gallery known as the Tate Liverpool- first established in 1988 and later re-developed and modernised in 1997-9
- The Merseyside Maritime Museum, which is the largest in Europe
- The 'Beatles Story' experience- an exhibition of memorabilia about the life and work of Liverpool's world- famous pop group

A wide range of eating establishments, hotels, shops and other facilities has also been built to cater for the many visitors. Disused warehouses have been converted into modern residential apartments and offices employing 2000 workers have been created. The whole area has therefore undergone a massive 'urban face-lift' over the last 25 years or so.

Liverpool has recently been chosen to be the UK's nomination for European Capital of Culture in 2008. Twelve cities in the UK put in bids for this award, which is a development from the EU programme of cities of culture started in 1985.

This programme involved choosing one city from the EU countries as a whole each year. After 2005 each member state will be allocated a year in which to nominate a city from their country and in 2008 it is the turn of the UK and Liverpool. This has led to a revival of interest in urban tourism in Liverpool with the three attractions above experiencing the fastest growth in visitor numbers during 2003.

**Fig 5. Characteristics of Merseyside visitors in 2000**



**Case Study 3. Castlefield urban heritage park in Manchester**

This was the UK's first 'urban heritage park', and covers the area which was at the heart of the city's industrial past. It was the site of the first wharf of the world's first man-made canal, the Bridgewater canal, built to transport coal, which was finished in 1765. Within 50 years Manchester had become the central city of the canal network – the main transportation network in the industrial period. The city was later connected to the port of Liverpool by the Manchester Ship Canal, which was built at the turn of the century. In 1830, the first passenger station in the world was also opened in Castlefield. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Manchester was a thriving, industrial city acting as the administrative centre for Lancashire's important cotton industry.

After the decline of the Lancashire cotton industry, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Manchester declined and the Castlefield area became an area of squalor and poverty. However, since the 1980s there has been a period of Renaissance. The old Roman fort that was built there in the first century AD has been restored. Many of the original warehouses have been converted into residential developments or house heritage tourist attractions. The famous Museum of Science and Industry has been set up in five buildings that were part of the original railway station. This museum contains working machines and interactive displays as well as a collection of material that examines the wider social implications of industrialisation. Other attractions are the Bridgewater canal basin and the massive Victorian viaducts. The Granada TV company has built a new attraction there, the Granada Studio Tours which increases the overall attraction of the area to tourists.

**Exam Hint:** It is very useful to have a details of at least one, preferably two case studies to use in exam answers. It could be a useful exercise to look at each of the three examples given here and to make a list of similarities and differences in their tourist features. To give an original approach to your answer you could always log on to the web site of another town that you have visited, which has some urban tourism and to do your own case study using those given here to help you.

**Sustainable urban tourism**

The three case-studies described above show the effects of the development of the urban heritage tourist industry within three very different cities in the UK. As this industry continues to grow it is important that the cities themselves and the very attractions that the visitors are coming to see are not adversely affected. The issue of Sustainable Tourism is thus important here. Butler defined Sustainable Tourism in 1993 as:

' that which is developed and maintained in an area in such a manner that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment, (physical or human) to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities.'

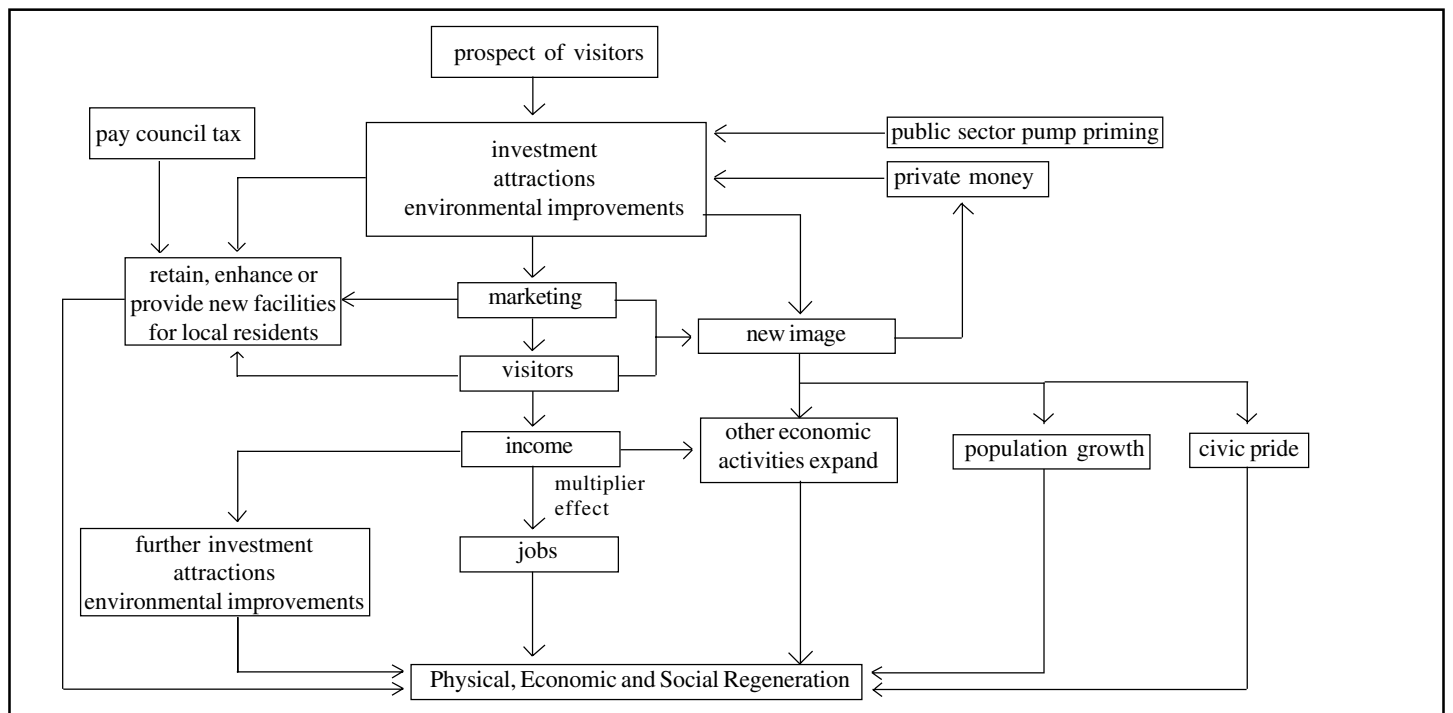
Cities are potentially more efficient than rural areas to support tourism as they already have well-developed infrastructures (road systems, utilities etc). However, as the tourism develops there are many related problems. Traffic congestion and air pollution increase and the overall quality of life for many residents falls, with reduced privacy etc. There can also be overcrowding of the central areas and over-use of facilities. Many local authorities are aware of these issues and include schemes for 'green tourism' such as reducing the visual impact of tourism and limiting its effect on the environment etc. in their 'Tourism Strategy Plans'.

**Exam Hint:** Sustainable Tourism is a very popular topic at the moment. It is important to be aware of the issues that are involved here so that you could refer to them in an exam answer.

**Conclusion**

It can be seen from the above case studies that the heritage-led regeneration of urban areas brings considerable benefits to many local urban economies. The historic environment is often a catalyst for the revitalisation of deprived areas and the promotion of community cohesion. With careful development and planning for the future by local authorities this industry can continue to grow for the benefit of both visitors and local residents within minimum effects on the urban environment. This is summarised by Fig 6.

**Fig 6 Virtuous circle of urban tourism**



**Useful websites**

If you visit the local site for any town in the UK you will find details of its Tourism Strategy and the attractions that it has e.g. [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk) or [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk), [www.albertdock.com/index.php](http://www.albertdock.com/index.php), [www.thisisbradford.co.uk](http://www.thisisbradford.co.uk) [www.manchester2002-uk.com/castlefield/castlefield2.html](http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/castlefield/castlefield2.html) A useful text is Urban Tourism. C. Law published by Mansell.

**Acknowledgements;** This Factsheet was researched and written by Barbara Melbourne who lectures in tourism and has a long standing interest in lesiure and tourism. Curriculum Press, Bank House, 105 King Street, Wellington, Shropshire, TF1 1NU. Geopress Factsheets may be copied free of charge by teaching staff or students, provided that their school is a registered subscriber.