eTourism and Online Communication Management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites: new trends and research perspectives

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Agenda

eTourism domain
Trends
UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) and ICT
Research perspectives
Tourism industry
Tourism industry

Tourism accounts for important part of national **GDPs** and **employment** globally

>> In Portugal in 2013:
- direct contribution to GDP was EUR9.5bn (**5.8% of total GDP**) in 2014
  - Forecast: 6.3% of total GDP in 2024
- tourism directly supported 322,000 jobs (**7.2% of total employment**)

In 2014 **1.1 billion** travellers moved across borders for touristic reasons

>> 8 million international tourists visited Portugal in 2013

Sources: WTO, Euromonitor, World Bank
eTourism
ICTs

eTourism

Travel and Tourism industry
Some facts

Tourism is number 1 in eCommerce

94% french, 91% german and 95% british are now using the web in ONE of the steps of the tourism related shopping process

European travelers visit on average 22 sites before deciding on their trip

71% of travel searches on YouTube are for specific tourism destinations

Sources: WTO, Euromonitor, European e-commerce association
ICT in Tourism

- Facilitate visitors to access tourism products and info anytime from anywhere

- Give the chance to tourism enterprises to reach targeted customers across the globe

- Reduce time & costs

- Change the way we run business and have individual travel experience
Management

- Global Distribution/Property Management Systems - occupancy rates, prices

Sales

- eCommerce - online travel agencies

Communication and Marketing

- Communication and marketing - websites by tourism players, mobile apps, review sites

ICT and tourism industry
ICT and individual experience
• Image, expectation-formation
• Planning
• Decision-making
• Transaction

- Search Engines
- Online travel review sites
- Online Travel Agencies or intermediaries (Expedia or Booking)
- Social media, photo sharing sites, blogs
- Specific websites for: transportation (Ryanair), hotels (Hotel Fundador), destinations / attraction (VisitPortugal), culture (UNESCO), weather forecast
• Short-term decision making
• Sharing
• On-site transaction

Getting there and during

✓ Smartphones apps
✓ Mobile guides and Audioguides (podcasts)
✓ Location based services: e.g. navigation systems, Google maps, Foursquare
✓ Payments: Credit Cards
✓ Youtube (attractions)
✓ Taking pictures/videos
✓ Stay in contact and be social: email, skype, photo sharing
✓ WI-FI
• Sharing
• Documentation
• Re-experiencing
• Narratiion

Post

✓ Sharing of experiences on social media
✓ Writing reviews for hotels, restaurants and attractions
✓ Gather more information about the visited destination
✓ Stay in contact with new friends/colleagues (e-mail, mobile, Skype, social networks,...)
✓ Stay in contact with the destination (social networks)
Trends
eTourism trends (i)

Social
Local
Mobile
Real time services
eTourism trends (ii)

Multiple screen
Sharing economy
eTourism trends (iii)

Augmented reality
Gamification

Augmented reality Berlin

Tourism Ireland
Create your own perfect town on the island of Ireland in...
Ireland Town
PLAY NOW!
UNESCO WHS
UNESCO WHS

A World Heritage Site is a place (such as a building, city, complex, desert, forest, island, lake, monument, or mountain) that is listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as being of special cultural or physical significance

1007 sites are listed
779 cultural, 197 natural, 31 mixed properties
161 states parties
In Portugal – 15 sites

**Cultural**

- **Alto Douro Wine Region** (2001)
- **Central Zone of the Town of Angra do Heroismo in the Azores** (1983)
- **Convent of Christ in Tomar** (1983)
- **Cultural Landscape of Sintra** (1995)
- **Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications** (2012)
- **Historic Centre of Évora** (1986)
- **Historic Centre of Guimarães** (2001)
- **Historic Centre of Oporto** (1996)
- **Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture** (2004)

**Monastery of Alcobaça** (1989)
**Monastery of Batalha** (1983)
**Monastery of the Hieronymites and Tower of Belém in Lisbon** (1983)
**Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde** (1998)
**University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia** (2013)

**Natural**

- **Laurisilva of Madeira** (1999)
UNESCO WHS and ICT
Five main areas of intervention for ICTs

- Widen access
- Increase ownership and promote interpersonal encounters
- Enrich visit experience
- Dis-intermediate (some) relationships
- Upgrade knowledge / skills in MSMTE
#1: Widen access

Provide access to information and share experiences online

E.g.: websites | wikipedia | videos | ....
#1: Widen access

E.g.: Evaluation of online presence of WHSs in Latin America

131 WHSs - 124 websites

>> 34% are managed by governmental institutions, 24% NGOs, and 20% belong to Tourism Boards. The remaining 20% is represented by info portals, private organizations and travel agencies.

>> Social media (57 Facebook profiles, 34 Twitter and 28 Youtube channels)
#1: Widen access

E.g.: 129 African WHSs: 24 dedicated websites

Lessons learned: Quality of online content (accuracy | authority | currency | objectivity | coverage) and usability of online communication tools
#2: ENRICH VISIT EXPERIENCE

While onsite: mobile access | location based services (LBS) | augmented reality (AR) | multiple voices | ...
#2: ENRICH VISIT EXPERIENCE

The case of mobile apps

July 2013, on iTunes apps 140 out of 981 WHSs
   >> 70 Europe, 41 Asia, 13 North America, 6 South America, 5 Africa, 3 Oceania, 2 Central America
   >> 47 sites had more than one app

WHS and/or UNESCO logo present in 12.2% and 11.3% of apps
   explicit reference to world heritage in 56.5% ¦ year of inscription: 31.3% ¦
   specific sustainability hints: 9.6% ¦ actual reason of inscription: 7.8% ¦
   UNESCO and its 1972 Convention: 4.4%
E.g.: **Patrimonio Ticino**

Lessons learned: Open source | no data roaming | clear statement on Outstanding Universal Value | promotion of responsible/sustainable tourism
#3: Increase ownership and promote interpersonal encounters

Digital story telling | informal learning | gamification | ...
E.g.: WHAC Y – World Heritage Awareness Campaign for Youth
(play it! www.whacygame.org/retosa)

Lessons Learned: collab. | informal learning + empowerment | 100k+ students involved
#4: DIS-INTERMEDIATE (some) RELATIONSHIPS

Distribute info | support communication and promotion by local players
Co-Design of eTourism Application. The Case of Ilha de Mozambique By Salomao David and Lorenzo Cantoni

Communicating Tourism Sustainability Online. The Case of Victoria Falls World Heritage Site. By Maria Garbelli, Asta Adukaite and Lorenzo Cantoni

E.g.: www.ilhademocambique.org (collab. | unexpected payers (Multimedia Center) | local involvement | MSMTE)

E.g.: www.olgasproject.com (from NGO’s to tourism communication)
#5: UPGRADE KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

eLearning | Open Educational Resources (OER) | Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
E.g.: elearning.ticino.ch | www.elearning4tourism.com
eTourism Research: USI perspective

Online Communication by Destination Management Organization
DMO online communication

✓ Listening

✓ Speaking

✓ Being aware
Listening to User Generated Contents by travelers (and prospects) and to their online behavior

- Benchmarking of online presence in mobile apps and websites
- Reputation studies in online media
- Argumentation analysis
- Evaluation of pictures taken by visitors
- Usages' analysis and Big data
Speaking in a usable way to the right people

- Online communication and promotion strategies
- Back-linking | Social Media | Search Engine Marketing
- Usability analysis & eye-tracking

Being aware of such dynamics

- Evaluation of maturity
- Understanding of public policy perspective and eGovernment practices
Conclusions

• eTourism domain
• Trends
• UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) and ICT
• Research perspectives

• Fast developing domain
• Needs to be understood and managed
• Interdisciplinary approach
• Research centers + public bodies + industry representatives → successful & sustainable development of the industry
www.unescochair.usi.ch
www.elearning4tourism.com

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