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International Journal of Cultural and Digital Tourism

Volume 8, Spring 2021 (Special Issue), ISSN (Online): 2241-9705, ISSN (Print): 2241-973X

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Georgaki Polyxeni, Chatzigrigoriou Pavlos, Nikolakopoulou Vasiliki, Chatzigrigoriou Eleni

As one of the essential variables of mass tourism, tour guiding suffered a significant hit in the context of the COVID-19 conjuncture. The pandemic revealed pathologies of the field spanning over decades, highlighting at the same time an essential structural issue: the tour guiding has never been treated as a methodological tool-object for the documentation and the evaluation of the "oral management" of the cultural reserve, and therefore as part of a more extensive interdisciplinary discussion. In a broader context, the dynamics that are inherent in guided tours, as a vigorous activity inextricably linked to cultural and tourist development, especially in our country, have not yet been highlighted to anticipated extents. The causes are many and varied. What is worth noting is the opportunity of guided tours to improve its tools and dynamics in the context of a situation that seems to threaten it -as a practice- dramatically. Although the process of designing tourist packages is usually limited to commercial terms, the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the guiding practice remains more urgent than ever. Given that mass travel is threatened - perhaps for the first time in its history - with extinction, how could one imagine the "next day" of the tour guiding, the tour guide and the tourism itself, in terms of demand and supply? What ideas, actions, tools, and methods can be used in this situation, for the visitor's interest to remain alive, but also refuelled continuously, for their destinations and narratives? This text introduces a new action that aims at maintaining, optimising, and evolving the tour guide as a primary tool for stimulating the visitor. With the help of technology, a new version of the touring process is proposed. Its key element is the presence of the tour guide, as a moderator of the experience, which is shared live on a digital platform. The experience is enriched with actions and events (interviews, music, videos, etc.), which are integrated as an organic part of it, in a single narrative. The island of Syros is proposed as a place for pilot implementation of the action (case study), for which a route narrative has already been designed, however, the possibilities of planning and implementation are unlimited.

19 - THE OCTANE ECOSYSTEM AND PLATFORM FOR CROSS-BORDER HERITAGE-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Ioannis Karydis, Elissavet Kosta, Emmanouil Magkos, Stavros Vlivos, Dimitris Provatas, Aggeliki Tsohou

The wide adoption and diffusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) designed to enhance travel experience have rapidly altered tourism and hospitality services. The OCTANE project primarily aims at supporting touristic infrastructure by: a) Establishing cross-border synergies between the regional authorities and the university institutions of Ionian Islands and Puglia, whose partnership will create a list of sightings, places/points and routes of interest (POIs) in both communities; and b) Providing a complementary distribution channel for cultural and natural heritage POIs that uses advanced ICT and mobile devices while at the same time enhancing the experience of on-the-move tourists. To support the aims of the project, in this paper we present the architecture of the OCTANE platform, which will enhance visitors' experience by developing and diffusing a mobile application that allows visitors to walk around the cities as if they were an open museum. The platform will enable the visitors to discover POIs as far as history, architecture, culture, everyday locations and other places a visitor will experience in the cities of Ionian and Puglia regions. Accordingly, one of the key characteristics of OCTANE will be the capacity to seamlessly present the cross-border historical, architectural, cultural and everyday location assets, between Ionian and Puglia regions, thus promoting synergy and touristic development.

33 - AN INNOVATIVE RECOMMENDER SYSTEM FOR HEALTH TOURISM IN A SMART DIGITALIZED WORLD

Antiopi Panteli, Aristotelis Kompothrekas, Constantinos Halkiopoulos, Basilis Boutsinas

The recommender systems process data for extracting information relevant to the user profile. In this study, we present an innovative recommender system aiming at matching health tourist preferences to health/tourism providers. It focuses on providing complete health tourism products, by matching the user profile to characteristics of both health and tourism service providers, in order that users receive the treatment they choose, in the right location, the right period, at the right cost. The proposed recommender system is implemented by applying a facility location problem which employs a parameter that controls the diversity of the recommendation list and thus the variety of the proposed results. It incorporates a database of cases, i.e., medical, wellness and tourism service providers. A case is described by a set of attributes such as medical service category, spa category, wellness category, cost, infrastructure, accreditations, communication languages, and so on. Users that have already acquired a health tourism package provide ratings for certain categories of attributes. A new user expresses her preferences in the form of a query and then the system tries to match this query to the cases that exist in the database. At first, the best possible cases are extracted, by applying a sorting procedure based on comparisons to the ideal one, i.e., that containing the best ratings for each attribute of the database. Then the facility location method is applied to provide the final recommended cases to the user that are both similar to the provided query and diverse to each other.

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