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EDITORIAL

Mobile systems for tourism

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1 Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies have been playing a major role within tourism (eTourism)—both within the experience of travellers as well as within the tourism industry at large.

The spread of mobile devices has brought new and highly relevant innovations in the eTourism field, especially due to the fact that mobile devices allow to be always/everywhere online, also while travelling, so that people can access information, publish contents, and communicate constantly with their relevant (social) networks. Smart phones are equipped to trace geographical positions and movements of their holders, hence they can provide location-based services, ranging from the usage of current position in the ranking algorithm of search engines (if one looks for a restaurant, she is likely to be interested in restaurants nearby), up to augmented reality to support the visit of archaeological sites.

Mobile devices are at the centre of a major media convergence path, offering the possibility to (re)present multimedia contents, to capture images, sounds and videos, as well as to collect and exchange other data—be they biometric information on their holders or info needed for payments or check-ins.

Related research hence tackles them from diverse but converging viewpoints: technological, marketing, sociological, psychological and communication

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perspectives can be found in the literature, just to name only a few of them. Think, for instance, of the close relationship between front cameras integrated in handheld devices (technical innovation) and the very practice of "selfie" (psycho/sociological and communication perspective), up to their integration within the travel experience and marketing communications.

Mobile systems have supported a major extension of user-generated contents, which can be analysed and interpreted in order to better understand travelers' needs and practices, both at the level of contents generated on purpose, e.g., online travel reviews, as well as at the level of data generated automatically, e.g., cell data for tracing movements along space.

This special issue of JITT presents a very interesting and well-balanced set of four papers, addressing the issue at stake from different yet converging perspectives.

The passionate use of mobiles phones among tourists, by Lidija Lalicic and Christian Weismayer, explores the very intriguing issue of the relationship between mobile devices and their owners, who can become "passionate users". The article, based on an exploratory data analysis approach, studies the psychological processes underlying mobile phone usage, which may affect the overall tourist experience. Such a research is not only relevant to better understand the unique relationships users might have with their mobile devices—perceived as being part of their deep identity—but is also highly relevant when it comes to designing mobile services aimed at supporting and enriching the touristic experience. Authors even suggest that further research should include also a possible "obsessive passion", which might interfere with the travel experience and could reduce the quality of relations with other travel partners.

An experience-based taxonomy of branded hotel mobile application features, by Chris Gibbs, Ulrike Gretzel, and Jesse Saltzman, provides a first, highly needed taxonomy to map hotel mobile applications. Here, the very interface between the touristic experience and how the hotel industry has embraced the mobile "turn" in eTourism is explored. Authors have identified 11 different categories of app features, based on the analysis of 24 hotel mobile applications. Such analysis is very useful not only from a theoretical viewpoint, to provide a consistent taxonomy for a highly complex and fast moving area, but also as a framework to be used by designers, developers and marketers.

Efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction of responsive mobile tourism websites—a mobile usability study, by Aleksander Groth and Daniel Haslwanter, approach the issue from the viewpoint of usability. The paper presents an experiment, in which 20 participants navigated a responsive mobile tourism website vs. a mobile adaptive website. Results provide first evidence, useful to analyse and anticipate the experience and satisfaction of users as well as to guide technical developments in the concerned field.

The fourth paper, *Preserving privacy in the context of location based services through location hider in mobile-tourism*, by P. Shanthi and S.R. Balasundaram, is more technical in nature. It addresses an issue that might be overlooked by researchers and industry players, focused solely on the advantages of location-based services: the issue of privacy. In fact, data tracing users of such location-based services could be hacked and/or used in ways that may harm their privacy and

security. The article proposes and discusses a possible solution to such issue, aimed at preserving the privacy of the users and at the same time still providing high quality geo-location both in cases where a single point is needed, and in cases where a movement along time is provided.

A special thank is due to all authors, who have contributed their knowledge and research, and to all reviewers, whose advice has been so precious in order to select the papers and to make them even better.