

Enhancing Cultural Heritage Experiences with Smart Technologies: An Integrated Experiential Framework

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Abstract

The paper addresses how smart technologies can be used to enhance cultural heritage experiences at tourism destinations. As its main contribution, it presents a framework to leverage the potential of multiple smart technologies throughout the visitors' experience at cultural heritage sites. The proposed framework builds on the theoretical foundation of the experience economy and the results of an analysis of best practices of smart technologies applied to cultural heritage sites. The analysis examines the capability of these technologies to intensify the four experience dimensions identified by Pine and Gilmore (1998) – Entertainment, Esthetic, Education and Escapism - in relation to an extended perspective of the visitors' experience including the three stages of the visit. The pilot testing of the framework provides

insights into the opportunities to use a combination of applications for facilitating and enriching the cultural visit at the destination according to a multi-stage and multi-dimensional perspective of the heritage experience. The integrated perspective proposed in the paper provides a contribution to advance theory and practice, based on the more comprehensive view of the potential role of smart technologies' in heritage experiences deriving from an integrated multi-stage and multi-dimensional analysis.

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Keywords: Cultural heritage experience; smart technologies; tourism destination; experience stages; experience dimensions.

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