

Chapter 4

The Augmented Reality Marketing: A Merger of Marketing and Technology in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This chapter elaborates on augmented reality marketing (ARM) as a digital marketing campaign and a strategic trend in tourism and hospitality. The computer assisted augmenting of perception by means of additional interactive information levels in real time is known as augmented reality. Augmented reality marketing is a constructed worldview on a device with blend of reality and added or augmented themes interacting with five sense organs and experiences. The systems and approaches of marketing are integrating with technological applications in almost all sectors of economies and in all phases of a business's value delivery network. Trends in service sector marketing provide opportunities in generating technology led tourism marketing campaigns. Also, the adoption, relevance and significance of technology in tourism and hospitality value delivery network can hardly be ignored. Many factors are propelling the functionalities of diverse actors in tourism. This paper explores the use of technology at various phases of tourism and hospitality marketing, along with the role of technology in enhancing consumer experience and value addition. It further supports the view that technology is aiding in faster diffusion of tourism products, relates destinations or attractions and thus benefiting the entire society. The augmented reality in marketing can create effective and enjoyable interactive experience by engaging the customer through a rich and rewarding experience of virtually plus reality. Such a tool has real potential in marketing in tourism and hospitality sector. Thus, this study discusses the ARM as a promising trend in tourism and hospitality and how this will meet future needs of tourism and hospitality products or offerings.

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INTRODUCTION

The development and outcomes of technology create new opportunities, market re- structuring and business processes automation in more meaningful ways (Thorpe et al., 2014). Thus, it is crucial that business strategists and policy planners realise the importance of changing market situations (Azim & Hassan, 2013). The use of technology enhances the capacities, efficiency, and effectiveness of business and thus maximises their productivity. Business world is competitive where timely selection and dispersion of the most suitable technological platform can ensure optimum advantages from both existing and new markets (Hax, 2010; Mohapatra, 2009). . Augmented reality marketing is a constructed worldview on a device with blend of reality and added or augmented themes interacting with five sense organs and experiences. The technology backed augmented reality marketing in tourism and hospitality sector appear as a theme of a purposeful research. Literally, augmented reality is the forward step and variation of virtual reality, where consumers can experience real world with the support of graphical imposition and relevant applications (Azuma, 1997). Augmented reality is believed to be helping individuals or consumers to enjoy more freedom in searching, viewing, selecting and purchasing products or services. Thus technological infrastructures and its use in tourism and hospitality will aid in designing effective marketing strategies in the future (Daim, et al., 2012). The technology supported marketing policies and strategies in tourism and hospitality sector would have much direct and indirect impact on the sector and national economies. This is as a result of wider availability and easy accessibility of computing and Smartphone devices for different customer segments. Now, consumers with even limited earning source and spending capacities are affording sophisticated technology enriched devices and gadgets with internet connectivity.

The convergence of technologies in smaller size computers such as notebook, tablet and mobile Smartphone are transforming digitally formatted data, images, voices and videos into real life imagery. The easiness and capacities of sharing, uploading and downloading data and information has helped in penetration of consumer- technological gadgets among all demographics and nationalities. The practices of adopting and using technology in tourism and hospitality business organisations have further accelerated the process of its development and diffusion. The technologies and mobile applications (Apps) have allowed the users to form interest groups to develop, use and explore applications further. These information communication and technological (ICT) changes are creating a new ecosystem dissolved in virtual technologies and expanding into various sectors such as online gaming, banking, social communities and particularly tourism and hospitality industry. This study concentrates on technology supported digital marketing campaigns as the augmented reality Marketing tool in tourism and hospitality business.

BACKGROUND

Augmented reality as argued is appearing as a buzzing concept now, especially when, technology is adopting newer form of applications. The notion of augmented reality somehow may appear as relatively unknown to non-technical readerships. *‘By Augmented Reality, abbreviated to AR, we understand the computer assisted augmenting of perception by means of additional interactive information levels in real time. The distinction between AR and Virtual Reality: in the case of Virtual Reality, the user is totally immersed in a virtual world that has no connection with reality’* (Buchholz, 2014). According to Johnson (2014), the sequences of augmented reality spectrum has evolved over the years through phases of simple

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