

Chapter 73

Digital Technologies for “Minor” Cultural Landscapes Knowledge: Sharing Values in Heritage and Tourism Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to point out the most emerging technologies in analysing and sharing knowledge about ‘not outstanding’ cultural landscapes. Therefore the chapter starts focusing on the concept of ‘minor’ cultural landscapes in the wider debate on heritage, then shows the changing approach to the question: the relevance of bottom-up vision in considering heritage. Secondly are taken into account image and information technologies through some definite research topics: Educating by multimedia; Experiencing and sharing new contents by people; Transmitting local heritage; Using image and information technologies to share collective experiences of places; Answering demand for social participation and free access to sources; Connecting tangible and intangible heritage in a tourist perspective. The goal of the chapter is to show how digital technologies can support knowledge and share of values about ‘minor’ cultural landscapes both through inhabitants and potential tourists to be attracted to.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Landscapes are the result of the ongoing increase of cultural values within natural environment, made up of tangible and intangible dimensions; so while tangible settings represent the place where people live, the intangible assets are the roots of cultural identity.

The speed of socio-economic transformation and urban environmental changes is a threaten for traditional landscapes, that are gradually replaced by new ones. The conservation of Cultural landscapes is a worldwide concern that has been taken into account since the *World Heritage Convention* (1972), which

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stated that *Landscape has different characteristics in each region depending on the cultural background and geographical condition*. Nevertheless, it considers only cultural landscapes as outstanding universal value and, in such a way, the consequence is creating a kind of values’ hierarchy, addressed to remarkable sites worthy to be preserved and visited by tourists on one hand, and “worthless” landscapes on the other.

It’s well known instead that there are places, in Italy, in Europe and more in general all over the world, less affected by urbanization and development, where survive human traces and cultural layers that are consisting legacies of tangible heritage (structures and housing infrastructure and productive cultural sediments, environmental and landscape resources ...) and intangible (cultural traditions, customs, local knowledge, authenticity ...).

Knowledge and documentation even of these cultural landscapes is crucial for several reasons: first of all to record the changes on respect of the places’ authenticity but also because it can impact people’s understating of places.

Innovative research today looks carefully at digital potential, so the chapter intends to deal, within the broader topics of Cultural Heritage, with the perspective offered by digital technologies available for knowledge, communication and information sharing of cultural landscapes considered as “not outstanding” value.

In particular, the chapter therefore focuses on what is meant as “minor cultural landscapes” in the wider debate about the cultural heritage and what may be the digital technology useful for their knowledge, shared values and dissemination of information in a supralocal dimension.

Digital resources made available primarily in the field of ICT, can contribute to a better understanding of heritage and landscapes at local but also regional, national and international levels, allowing, through the dissemination of information by the network, to implement and possibly boost the economy of these sites through sustainable tourism strategies, with a marked cultural approach.

“MINOR” CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE HERITAGE DEBATE

Cultural Landscapes: Concepts and Definitions

In order to outline the definition about ‘minor’ cultural landscapes and their fruitful connection to digital technologies in enhancing heritage and territory, it is necessary to recall briefly the framework of the main definitions and international conventions on Cultural landscapes’ theme; first of all the definition itself:

‘Cultural landscape’ as a term was apparently invented in academia in the early twentieth century. The term, and a particular idea it embraced, was promoted by Prof. Carl Sauer in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. It only came into accepted professional use in conservation circles in the 1990s (Jacques, 1995), not least through its adoption by the World Heritage Committee and its promulgation throughout the world by the World Heritage. (Fowler, 2002)

The *World Heritage Convention* (1972) in fact states that *Landscape has different characteristics in each region depending on the cultural background and geographical condition*, thus introducing a relevant legitimacy principle of diversity even though, in general, the approach by UNESCO and ICOMOS on the issue is to consider cultural landscapes as outstanding universal value and, in such way, creating a kind of hierarchy in values.

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