Book review

Tourism Information Technology

Information technologies have invaded our world and proliferated in our everyday life. Tourism, as a very information-intensive industry, uses most of the technological innovations throughout all its sectors and activities. The third edition of Benckendorff, Xiang and Sheldon's book, *Tourism Information Technology*, provides an excellent insight into this matter.

The book consists of 13 chapters, distributed into five parts – Part I: understanding tourism information technology; Part II: looking and booking; Part III: travelling; Part IV: staying and playing; and Part V: issues and trends. The structure of the book, as explained in the first introductory chapters, follows the customer experience through the guest cycle in the tourism industry, i.e. searching for information, making bookings, traveling to the destination, staying at the destination and returning from the destination. Then, each of the specific technologies is deeply explored (internet – chapter 4, social media – chapter 5, mobilities – chapter 6). Afterwards, the authors shift to the tourism subsectors, namely, aviation (Chapter 7), road transport (Chapter 8), accommodation/hospitality (Chapter 9), visitor attractions and experience (Chapter 10) and finish with the destination management (Chapter 11). Surprisingly, the travel intermediaries' chapter (Chapter 3) is situated right in the beginning –

probably because the initial phase of the guest cycle starts with searching and preliminary booking – activities typical for the travel intermediaries.

In the introductory chapter (chapter 1), the authors clearly state the aims, main terms and chapter outline of the book. By providing the large span of information technologies and diverse tourist services, it is a very useful description of the book's subject and precise definition of its scope. After the general overview, the second chapter "The digital tourism landscape" delves deeper, exploring the participants' role in the tourism value chain, all in the context of information and communication technologies. The historical background strongly contributes to the better understanding of the digital ecosystem. All the other chapters start with similar evolutionary approaches, thus facilitating reader's perception and consistent flow of the text.

From *a pedagogical perspective*, the book is constructed as a primary source for students because each chapter includes learning objectives in the beginning and key terms and discussion questions at the end. In addition, the useful sites and case studies complement the presented overview with appropriate examples from the real business world. We appreciate very much the comprehensive approach regarding information technologies, especially the accessible language, the detailed definition of each new term/technology item and the explanation of its role within the digital tourism ecosystem. The numerous figures and charts additionally enhance the visualisation of the text.

Furthermore, the authors analyse technologies' application in all processes and procedures, taking place within a particular sector. For example, in the aviation chapter (Chapter 7), after the overview and structure of the industry, the book delves deeper to the particular systems, where information technologies are used – such as fleet management, crew scheduling systems and flight scheduling systems. Although these are very specific details, which require closer knowledge of the sector and may not be a direct subject of the book, the explanation elucidates in a very comprehensive way what happens inside, what stands behind the technologies and how they are actually involved. The numerous industry insights, case studies and QR codes, leading to certain websites or particular cases and videos in internet, bring additional value to the reader and at the same time, enlarge the knowledge provided to readers.

The last part of the book deals with sustainability issues (Chapter 12) and projected trends for the future of information technology and tourism (Chapter 13). Table 12.1 makes a thorough summary of all IT applications in sustainable tourism. Another good insight is the detailed analysis of the three sustainable premises, presented as certain activities in the context of tourism. Thus, the sustainability concept get much more particularity in environmental, social and economic sense.

From *a futures perspective*, the last chapter identifies 10 trends that would determine the future development and usage of the information technologies: ubiquitous artificial intelligence, fragmentation of information, digital elasticity, storytelling, the empowered smart traveller, big data and analytics, smart machines, material technologies, open systems and convergence. All of them, in line with the previous chapters, are analysed within the traveller experience and the tourism industry. This chapter provides a sound ground for future research on technologies in travel, tourism and hospitality. The book is written in a comprehensive and easy to understand manner. The logical flow and numerous examples and insights make it an excellent source for students, lecturers, researchers and practitioners.

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