



IFITT President's Message



I hope you enjoyed ENTER2012 at Helsingborg, Sweden as much as I did, both the business/ educational and social sides. Our gratitude goes to Malin and Pia and their team for hosting us. Everyday our eTourism community is getting stronger and the impact of our activities is becoming more evident. I am so glad to meet so many of you in events and activities around the world.

BOARD AND AGENDA

Following the IFITT AGM at ENTER2012 I was very honored to be reelected as President and to take IFITT forward to the global stage. A new Board <http://www.ifitt.org/home/view/ifitt-board> is already taking things forward. We now have a much stronger marketing and communications team with Tinkara, Alessandro and Rosanna and we can make a big influence.

As we said before our strategic objectives for 2012 will concentrate on :

- Expand IFITTs footprint globally through a range of local events and chapter activities
- Expand on membership and chapter activities
- Bring new benefits to members
- Facilitate more networking to the eTourism community
- Engage in conversation with partners and other international organizations

ENTER 2013 celebrates its 20th birthday back home in Innsbruck Austria. ENTER2013 eTourism Opportunities and Challenges for the next 20 years Innsbruck Austria 22nd to 25th of January 2013. www.enter-2013.org

We are very fortunate to have a very strong of chairs to take the responsibility of the conference ENTER 2013 Team:

- IFITT President: Professor Dimitrios Buhalis (Bournemouth University)
- ENTER 2013 Chair: Tinkara Pavlovčič Kapitanovič (Slovenian Tourism Board)
- Industry Chair: Giancarlo Carniani (BTO and Hotel Mulino di Firenze) and Luis Costa (Tourism Portugal)
- Destination Chair: Nicholas Hall (ETC) and William Bakker (Think! Social Media)
- Research Chairs: Lorenzo Cantoni (Università della Svizzera italiana) and Phil Xiang (University of North Texas, USA)
- Austrian Day Chairs: Christian Maurer (IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems), Mario Jooss and Roman Egger (University of Applied Sciences Salzburg)
- PhD Workshop: Rob Law (Hong Kong Polytechnic University) and Matthias Fuchs (ETOUR Mid-Sweden University), Carlos Lamsfus (CICtourGUNE), Barbara Neuhofer (Bournemouth University)

ENGAGE

- Submit a research paper
<http://www.ifitt.org/congresses/website/enter2013/cfp>
- Suggest an Industry Case Study and Presentation
<http://www.ifitt.org/congresses/website/enter2013/enter-industry>
- Suggest a Destination Case Study and Presentation
<http://www.ifitt.org/congresses/website/enter2013/enter-destination>
- Sponsor ENTER2013 – Many opportunities also available

Let make our 20th Birthday a very special one

ENTER2014: We also starting the process to select the ENTER2014 location and organiser. Please let us know if you are interested in hosting ENTER2013 and start putting a bid together.

See the requirements on <http://www.ifitt.org/home/view/ENTERrequirements>

The deadline for proposals is the 15th May 2012 and we will aim to select a destination in the early part of autumn.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS: through events we will increase IFITT's footprint and we start collaborating with colleagues and organisations to support events and conferences around the world where IFITT can make a contribution. I am also presenting IFITT in all the conferences I am invited around the world. If you feel that IFITT should be presented in another conference please let me know. We are also arranging for a range of additional events to bring the community together

- IFITT@EYEFORTRAVEL EUROPEAN TRAVEL SUMMIT London IFITT @ EyeforTravel: Technology Enabled Tourism Experience Economy Wednesday, 18 April 2012 from 09:00 to 11:30 London, United Kingdom
FREE EVENT FOR IFITT MEMBERS – Register <http://ifitteft.eventbrite.co.uk/>
- IFITT@ World Travel Market 2012 <http://www.wtmlondon.com/> Technology Enabled Tourism Experience Economy Monday 5th November 2012 from 10.00 - 12.00
- Followed by eTourism events by our partners the TTI and Open Travel conference starting at 13.30 - 17.00 FREE EVENT FOR IFITT MEMBERS – Register <http://ifitt.eventbrite.co.uk/>

IFITT goes to CHINA: with Rosanna Leung on the Board we started concentrating on China and to establish a presence in the Chinese media.

IFITT just joined China Weibo, please help us to invite your friends in China who are interested to exchange information in Tourism and Information Technology follow our page. 国际旅游资讯科技联合会(IFITT)刚加入微博, 希望各方好友多多关注, 把IFITT 介绍给有兴趣在旅游和资讯科技一起交流的好友。

IFITT just joined China Renren.com, please help us to invite your friends in China who are interested to exchange information in Tourism and Information Technology follow our page. 国际旅游资讯科技联合会(IFITT) 刚加入人人网, 希望各方好友多多关注, 把IFITT 介绍给有兴趣在旅游和资讯科技一起交流的好友。

Weibo微博: <http://weibo.com/ifitt>

Renren人人网: <http://www.renren.com/441188367>

MEMBERSHIP: with our systems in place we are now ready to have a major push and drive membership. We have clarified the Corporate and Discounted Corporate prices and benefits too. One of the major benefits is our ability to reinforce our corporate members <http://www.ifitt.org/home/view/corporate-members> Please renew your membership as your current membership if you have not done so far and benefit from the exclusive benefits of accessing the ENTER research paper proceedings electronically, accessing the presentations of ENTER and many others. Please use our online system and report back if you experience any difficulties.

NEW IDEAS: we are very open to new ideas and suggestions for IFITT activities. Things that you feel that IFITT should be doing. Please send me an email with initiatives that you would like IFITT to take in the future.

Yours Truly
Professor Dimitrios Buhalis
IFITT President March 2012

PhD Self Presentation

Barbara Neuhofer: Technology Enhanced Tourist Experiences



I am currently a PhD Student at the eTourismLab at the School of Tourism at Bournemouth University, UK. I hold a Bachelor and Masters degree in Tourism Management from the University of Derby, UK. In my master's dissertation, I undertook an analysis of the perceived value of touristic location based services. Besides my great interest in etourism and mobile tourism, further research interests regard website usability and tourism experiences, in particular, the role ICTs play in the enhancement of tourism experiences.

Before starting with my PhD, I was working as a research assistant at the Tourism Research Department at the University of Applied Sciences Salzburg, in my hometown Salzburg, Austria for the past two years.

In October 2011, I received the John Kent Institute in Tourism PhD Studentship at Bournemouth University to undertake my doctoral research on the cutting-edge topic, entitled: "The Technology Enhanced Tourist Experience: a holistic exploration of how technology can enhance tourist experiences", which is supervised by Prof. Dimitrios Buhalis and Prof. Adele Ladkin. In my research I'm exploring how the tourist experience can be enhanced by technology throughout all stages, i.e. pre/during/post, of the travel process. The notion of consumers increasingly striving for experiences constitutes a prevalent concept in today's experience economy. The impact of information and communication technologies has profoundly changed the nature of tourist experiences, the understanding of which is crucial for creating experiences in the future. However, there is evidence that experiences in a technology-mediated context are currently little understood. Based on this rationale, my research aims to provide a theoretical contribution in terms of developing holistic understanding of the new phenomenon Technology Enhanced Tourist Experience.

The participation in the ENTER 2012 PhD Workshop allowed me gaining invaluable feedback in an early stage of my research and sharing my study with fellow students and scholars in the field. In addition to the feedback, I'm very grateful to the PhD Workshop Committee for having been awarded the 2nd Place for the Best PhD Proposal. I look forward to an exciting year of my PhD research and presenting the progress of my study in my home country next year at ENTER 2013 @ Innsbruck, Austria.

Barbara Neuhofer

eTourismLab/John Kent Institute in Tourism

Bournemouth University, UK

Email address: bneuhofer@bournemouth.ac.uk

Website: www.bournemouth.ac.uk/etourismlab/people/barbara-neuhofer/

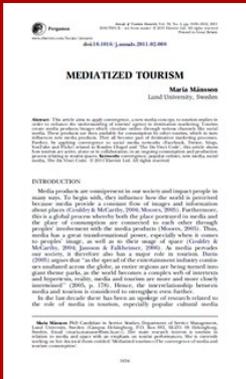
Submit your presentation: ifitt@ifitt.org

What's New in Journals (edited by Ulrike Gretzel)

Title: Mediatized Tourism

Author: Maria Månsson

Journal: *Annals of Tourism Research*, Volume 38, Issue 4, Pages 1634-1652



This article aims to apply convergence, a new media concept, to tourism studies in order to enhance the understanding of tourists' agency in destination marketing. Tourists create media products/images which circulate online through various channels like social media. These products are then available for consumption by other tourists, which in turn influences new media products. They all become part of destination marketing processes. Further, by applying convergence to social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and Flickr) related to Rosslyn Chapel and 'The Da Vinci Code', this article shows how tourists are active, alone or in collaboration, in an ongoing consumption and production process relating to tourist spaces.

Title: A behavioural analysis of web sharers and browsers in Hong Kong using targeted association rule mining

Author: Jia Rong, Huy Quan Vu, Rob Law and Gang Li

Journal: *Tourism Management*, Volume 33, Issue 4, Pages 731-740

With the widespread use of Internet technology, electronic word-of-mouth [eWOM] communication through online reviews of products and services has a strong influence on consumer behavior and preferences. Although prior research efforts have attempted to investigate the behavior of users regarding the sharing of personal experiences and browsing the experiences of others online, it remains a challenge for business managers to incorporate eWOM effects into their business planning and decision-making processes effectively. Applying a newly proposed association rule mining technique, this study investigates eWOM in the context of the tourism industry using an outbound domestic tourism data set that was recently collected in Hong Kong. The complete profiles and the relations of online experience sharers and travel website browsers are explored. The empirical results are useful in helping tourism managers to define new target customers and to plan more effective marketing strategies.



Title: The Role of Cybermediaries in Reputation Building and Price Premiums in the Online Hotel Market

Author: Nira Yacouel and Aliza Fleischer

Journal: *Journal of Travel Research*, Volume 51, Issue 2, Pages 219-226



The advent of the Internet has changed the way in which buyers and sellers interact. Although access to information seems unlimited, nonexpert agents find it difficult to identify the information they can use with confidence. A third-party expert, or cybermediary (online intermediary), can help sort out the information for the potential buyers. In this article, we study the case of the online hotel market. We claim that online travel agents (OTAs) such as Booking.com play an important role in building hotel reputation and encourage hoteliers to put effort into service quality. We provide empirical evidence that information supplied by past guests through the OTA generates a price premium for hotels with good reputations.

IFITT Updates

Chapter Update

(Edited by Paul Baron, IFITT Chapter Director)

IFITT members from Portugal are looking at establishing a Portugal chapter. Watch this space for a possible launch in May at an IFITT co-branded event.

The Greece chapter is creating action teams that cover different areas of the tourism sector (destinations etc) and a blog will be set up in order to frequently generate and share content for the Greek IFITT members.

The Australasian chapter are hoping to create an IFITT chapter ICT & tourism best practice workshop later in the year.

Already they have strong interest from Australian State and Federal Governments and academia.

The short papers from the Italian Chapter's BTO event will be published soon; also development of an Italian chapter website is under way.

First Issue of IFITT Junction was launched on 1st March, 2012.

(Edited by Rosanna Leung, IFITT Communications & Membership Director)

We are happy to announce the first issue of our new bi-weekly newsletter "IFITT Junction" was launched on 1st March, 2012. This is a new service we offer to our community in order to keep you updated about current and interesting issues in hospitality and tourism information technology. Technology changes everyday and there are large number of information available on the Internet. You might need to spend lots of time reading and digesting these news. To save your time and effort, the editor of this newsletter Ms. Rosanna Leung will search for interesting hospitality and tourism IT articles from social media sites, blogs, commercial websites, newspapers and magazines, and select the top interesting stories for you. The news headlines will sub-categorize into six areas: destination, travel agent, hospitality, airlines, mobile, and social media to suit your interest.

We hope this newsletter could become our subscribers' one stop information hub. If you found any interesting story and would like to share with our community, please post it to our facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ifitt/>), or email to Rosanna. Rosanna look forward your comments and suggestions to this new born baby.

Her email address: rosanna.leung@connect.polyu.hk.

IFITT Innovation Fund

(Edited by Wolfram Höpken, IFITT Vice President and Treasurer)

By the IFITT Innovation Fund IFITT intends to foster innovation and strengthen the strategic development of IFITT. IFITT will fund projects or initiatives, proposed and executed by IFITT members, with the clear intention to deliver innovative services to the IFITT community and increase existing or generate new revenue streams. IFITT members are invited to submit project proposals clearly stating generation of strong advantages and benefits for the IFITT community, either by a direct return on investment or an increase of IFITT's reputation and membership. Project proposals can be submitted at any time and IFITT will invest up to € 10.000 into innovative projects per year.

Additionally, by the IFITT ICT4D Scholarship (Information and Communication Technologies for Development) IFITT will fund young talents coming from developing/emerging countries, to provide a positive impact onto their respective communities through the application of ICT. Projects should be connected with a Master or PhD thesis, having a clear orientation to local development. The scholarship consists of an assignment of a tutor, funding of ENTER participation and free IFITT membership for one year. The call for applications is open till the end of April 2012.

By the IFITT innovation fund, IFITT creates innovative ideas and services for its members based on the potential of the whole community, increases its awareness in developing countries and specifically in countries which are underrepresented in IFITT and ENTER and takes social responsibility. Contact ifitt@ifitt.org to request further information or submit your proposals.

IFITT & SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media Section

(Edited by Tinkara Pavlovic Kapitanovic, IFITT Marketing and Communications Director)

Stay connected with the IFITT community also via social networks

You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr. Choose your preferred way to interact with us and get the latest news and information on the IFITT & IFITT benefits, ENTER conferences, special discounts, innovation funds and other services. Be part of the latest IT & Tourism related expert discussions.

/FB icon/ www.facebook.com/pages/IFITT/309768745743914

/Twitter icon/ [@ifittorg](http://www.twitter.com/ifittorg)

/LinkedIn icon/ group IFITT at <http://linkd.in/xcUBHC>

/Youtube icon/ www.youtube.com/ifittorg

/Flickr icon/ www.flickr.com/ifitt

IFITT moving towards China

(Edited by Rosanna Leung, IFITT Communications & Membership Director)

To increase our exposure to new region, we are happy to launch our new Chinese micro blog and social media page in China. Sina Weibo (新浪微博) is currently the most popular micro blog in China which has more than 300 million registered users (February 2012). Renren.com (人人网) is the Chinese social media website playing the similar role as Facebook. From the statistics in April 2011, it has around 31 million active monthly users. We look forward to have more industry and academia in China engaged in these two sites and attracts these followers to join IFITT. To motivate them to engage more in our community, we daily selected interesting hospitality and tourism IT stories and translated the headlines into Chinese for our followers (or fans). Up to March 15 (1.5 month after launch), our weibo and renren page has 52 and 10 followers.

Please help to introduce your friends in China who are interested in IT in hospitality and tourism follow our page in Weibo and Renren.com

Sina Weibo: <http://weibo.com/ifitt>

Renren.com: <http://www.renren.com/441188367>

Engage with the newsletter

- Submit an article for the next newsletter: ifitt@ifitt.org

- Submit events: ifitt@ifitt.org



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editor: Alessandro Inversini— alessandro.inversini@usi.ch

IFITT president: Dimitrios Buhalis - dbuhalis@bournemouth.ac.uk

research & PhD section editor: Ulrike Gretzel - ugretzel@uow.edu.au

IFITT Updates: Rosanna Leung - rosanna.leung@connect.polyu.hk

IFITT Updates: Wolfram Höpken - wolfram@hoepken.org

IFITT Updates: Paul Baron - paul.baron@tourism.vic.gov.au

Social Media Section: Tinkara Pavlovic Kapitanovic - tinkarapk@gmail.com