MOBILE APPLICATIONS IN IRISH TOURISM

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Technology and Sustainability in Tourism
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Sustainability and Technology Tourism in Ireland

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Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

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Preface

When faced with the task of investigating and preparing this case study, we considered a number of options. These ranged from eco-friendly tourist attractions to sporting venues throughout the country. Finally, however, we decided that the topic that best fit the title we were given was an investigation into the impact of mobile applications.

The following case study highlights the importance of the adaption and effective use of mobile technology using the example of Ireland today. We researched companies in various sectors of the tourism industry and their use of mobile apps as both marketing and sales tools. We hoped to explore and highlight the many effects that these apps have in the Irish tourism sector.

Much hard work and dedication were involved in the writing of this case study. This included analysing data, conducting interviews and visiting locations. We feel a great sense of pride of this project and hope you find it to be informative and interesting.

*We have quickly become a mobile-centric society.*
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

Mind Map
This is the original essay that we submitted for the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership’s (G.T.T.P.) Research Award 2014. In it we investigated the effect of mobile applications on the tourism sector of Ireland and hoped to show how important it is that tourism related businesses adopt the use of these “apps”. The essay was picked as the winner of the Irish competition, and we were chosen to represent Ireland at the GTTP International Student/Teacher Conference in Nice in November 2014. There we had the chance to present our project to many peers and teachers on an international forum.

In recent years, technology has transformed and enhanced tourism making holidaying a hassle free, cheap, reliable and quick process. Through this, our tourism industry has grown and become more open to visitors, bolstering revenue and making the Irish tourism sector a more sustainable environment. With the click of a button or a touch of a screen, tourists can book flights, find a room, read reviews and inform their friends about it on social media sites without even leaving the comfort of their own homes. Through our case study we will investigate the growing prominence of mobile applications in tourism and how it benefits the sector in Ireland.

So how has tourism technology developed? With the invention of the World Wide Web in the late 90’s hotels, airlines and other tourist related businesses began to market and sell their services online. After the turn of the century, tourist sites boomed as many people turned away from the traditional method
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

of local travel agents in search better deals and more exotic locations. In the period between 1995 and 2005 International tourist arrivals seen a jump in 237 million which is largely due to the internet’s influence on bookings. This marked a dramatic change in the tourism landscape as any company who wished to be sustainable had to develop websites. Due to the fast pace technology development we are now faced with a new era of technology tourism again; that being ‘mobile applications’.

A mobile app, short for mobile application, or just app, is software designed to run on smartphones, tablet computers and other mobile devices. In other words, one can visit the app store where one can download any of the apps on show. These apps can range from a flashlight on your phone to a G.P.S. mapping system. In addition to this there is also a large amount of tourist related apps available. We intend to explore the different tourist apps available to tourists in Ireland today.

To fully understand the uses and potential of apps we will look at a variety of them related to Ireland starting with the ‘Visit Dublin’ App. Apps can advertise certain areas, in the case of the ‘Visit Dublin’ App by Geo Guides Ltd. it is our capital city Dublin. Through this app you can listen to a great variety of guides of the city free of charge; from “Viking and Medieval Dublin” to “Rock’n’Stroll”. This app allows tourists to acquire the full experience of the area both culturally and historically and at the same time sustains the “Big Smoke’s” cultural heritage. The app has brief information pages on all Dublin's attractions and shows their location on a map also. Another interesting aspect of this app is the facility which allows local businesses to post ‘Special Offers’. Throughout the country many towns and cities are also setting up apps of
similar style which can only be seen in a positive manner as it is a very
effective manner of marketing. Through this study, one suggestion we would
have for the developers of the app would be to allow users to book hotels and
reserve tables in restaurants throughout Dublin.

Aer Lingus is a pioneering Irish aviation company which is using a mobile
app to minimise waste and maximise customer ease. Through using this app,
one can use their smartphone or mobile device both to check in and as a
boarding pass on all flights. To avail of this mobile app, passengers must
provide identification through the form of a Booking Reference number, then
provide baggage details and they will be given a code that can be scanned off
the screen of their mobile device. This cuts down greatly on paper use and
waste associated with traditional check-in methods make the company more
environmentally sustainable. The app also hosts the ability to book flights, plan
trips and receive on-flight changes or special offers. An increase in revenue
has been seen within Aer Lingus since the release of their app aiding the
companies financially sustainability as well.

Social media apps such as Facebook and Instagram play a vital role in
tourism both through tourists sharing tales of their experiences with friends
and also for companies to advertise what they have on offer. The highly
popular social media app Facebook has its international headquarters in
Ireland. In today’s modern, technologically savvy world, it is rare to see a
restaurant, hotel or tourist attraction without an active page on the app.
Through social media, they can promote special offers and reach a wide
group people with upcoming events. The app also offers its users the chance
to “tag” themselves in any location they have visited. This is great for
advertising places through other peoples’ first hand experiences and gives an honest review of the location in question. Also all attractions’ websites have a one-click button to ‘share’ their business on this app. On their site, one can book the companies’ service; whether it is hotel bookings, restaurant reservations or tickets to tourist attractions. These online purchases boost income and create an easy method of purchasing and booking.

In addition some tourists choose to post pictures of their travels on the “Instagram” app which is a photo sharing app owned by Facebook. These pictures can entice their “followers” to visit these sites and boost tourist numbers. This personal advertisement sustains tourist revenue and also sustains and spreads our cultural heritage through people’s descriptions of their experiences. We believe it would be an advantage to businesses to advertise a word to “hashtag” when posting pictures of the location on the app which would mean if an Instagram user searched the location all pictures would be on view.

In conclusion, it is our belief that the future of tourism lies in the hands of technology and specifically mobile apps. The benefits of apps are clear to tourism related businesses as they provide a blank canvas for a business to advertise and to increase and sustain profits. The popularity of apps is only set to increase and for businesses to remain sustainable they must explore this market. They offer the tourist a chance to take a tour of a city without a tour guide, book a flight to any destination without a booking desk and tell tales of exotic locations without opening their mouths. The opportunities are endless.
Ireland

Ireland is an island in the North Atlantic to the west of Great Britain, from which it is separated by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St Georges Channel, and after which it is the largest island of the British Isles. It is the third-largest island in Europe and the twentieth-largest island on Earth.

Politically, Ireland is divided between the Republic of Ireland, which covers five-sixths of the island, and Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom, which covers the remaining area and is located in the north-east of the island. The population of Ireland is about 6.4 million. Just under 4.6 million live in the Republic of Ireland and just over 1.8 million live in Northern Ireland.

A Map of Ireland showing the thirty-two counties split into their four provinces.
Overview of Irish Tourism
Statistics

When tourists think of Ireland, they may imagine our long winding coastal roads and traditional hospitality or the vivid city that is Dublin, our capital city, with its political past, lively nightlife and rich culture. The upkeep of this attractive image requires the collaboration of many different industries including the industry which we investigated; the technology sector.

So first, we must look at some of the overall tourism statistics for the country and globally and examine any trends or changes (www.ireland.com) which present themselves in recent years.

As we can see from the left that although Europe is not the largest or most populated continent it still gains the highest percentage of tourism receipts at 43% of all global receipts.

So the fact that Europe holds such a large share of this lucrative market surely bodes well for the Irish tourism industry. So let us have a look at some statistics specifically related to the Irish tourism sector.
The above table shows the total number of tourists who visited Ireland in the years between 2009 and 2013. There is a clear decline in the year 2010 which is contributed to the global recession but since that year there has been an impressive increase. These are the years that the rise of the mobile application truly took place and so are the most interesting for our studies.

Below is a list of the sources of the information provided by Fáilte Ireland.

**Sources of information for choosing/planning a holiday in Ireland (%)**

| Source: Fáilte Ireland’s Post Survey of Holidaymakers 2013 |
Finally, the above table (www.ireland.com) shows where these tourists are coming from. This is vitally for our investigation as it gives us an understanding of where exactly our visitors are coming from.

These mobile applications which we are about to discuss can be used in many languages. Through examining these figures, app developers can ensure that their app is available in all languages that are required by a reasonable amount of visitors and so appeal to a wider market.
Mobile Technology

“As technology is evolving faster than ever before, it has made most travellers around the world much more technology-savvy than in the past. The internet has revolutionized the tourism industry more than any other factor in the last few decades. Also, as more people are connected to each other, with access to the vast pool of information available online, an increasing number of travelers are seeking information via the internet prior to making any travel decisions. Hence, it has become important for the tourism industry to adapt and uplift its practices and skills of the workforce within in to meet changing customer behaviour”

Apichai Sakulsureeyadej,
CEO and Founder, Tourism Technology Association
(Blanco)
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

The development of technology is one of the most important factors that have affected global tourism in the last 50 years. As technology has developed, the opportunities for tourism around the world have expanded dramatically.

With the invention of the World Wide Web in the late 90's hotels, airlines and other tourist related businesses began to market and sell their services online. The world is now witnessing a revolution in communications and information technology which leads to the development.

Consequently, with this revolution the world has become as a small village where knowledge and information can be exchanged in a short period of time with minimal effort and cost, and the development of any country is measured by the knowledge it has and by the technology and communications it uses.

Also, with the development of computers and the internet this has provided countless other ways of increasing tourism. Not only is it now far easier for people to research and book holidays through dedicated web sites for this purpose but also it is far easier for them to be advertised to. This has resulted in a large increase in global tourism can be reduced.

Accompanying the technological revolution of the 1990s there are many new opportunities and challenges for the tourism and hospitality industries. Since tourism, global industry information is its life-blood and technology has become fundamental to the ability of the industry to operate effectively and competitively. Poon (1993) suggests that the whole system of information
technologies is being rapidly diffused throughout the tourism industry and no player will escape information technologies impacts.

After the turn of the century, tourist sites boomed as many people turned away from the traditional method of local travel agents in search better deals and more exotic locations. In the period between 1995 and 2005 International tourist arrivals saw a jump in 237 million which is largely due to the internet’s influence on bookings. Another form of technology which has influenced tourism is media and communication. TV has provided a format not only for travel and holiday advertisement but also for programmes devoted entirely to advertising a foreign country. A more subtle form of TV advertisement is through documentaries. As people see foreign countries portrayed in the favourable light of television they can feel inspired to visit that country.

This marked a dramatic change in the tourism landscape as any company who wished to be sustainable had to develop websites. Due to the fast pace technology development we are now faced with a new era of technology tourism again; that being ‘mobile applications’.
So, what is an App?

You may have heard people talking about applications or an app for short. But what exactly is an app? This abbreviation is of course new and so, in 2010, was named the American Dialect Societies’ word of the year, which just shows just how big the ‘app’ phenomenon really is. Simply, an ‘app’ is a type of software that allows you to perform specific tasks. Applications for desktop or laptop computers are sometimes called desktop applications, and those for mobile devices are called mobile apps. These functions range from trivial functions, such as games, to more serious functions, such as heart rate monitors.

Mobile apps were originally offered for general purposes, including email, calendar, contacts, and stock market and weather information. However, public demand drove rapid expansion into other categories, such as mobile games, factory automation, GPS and location-based services, banking, order-tracking, ticket purchases and recently mobile medical apps. The explosion in number and variety of apps made discovery a challenge, which in turn led to the creation of a wide range of review and recommendation...
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

sources, including blogs, magazines, and dedicated online app-discovery services.

The above chart shows how vast an increase that has occurred in the number of these apps downloaded in recent years. This is why we chose to investigate how these apps affect the tourism sector in Ireland. It is our belief that the use of mobile applications will shape the Irish tourism industry for years to come.
The era of the mobile application has certainly reached the tourism sector, and has many uses in the sector. As we can see by the following statistics it is clear that mobile devices are the future:

- 86% of time spend on a mobile device is spent in apps
- 76% of all social media activity happens on mobile devices
- Mobile traffic is expected to grow over 10x over the next 5 years

Through the following examples we hope to give you an insight into the vast range of uses that mobile applications have in the Tourism industry.

- The Visit Dublin App
- The Aer Lingus App
- Facebook & Instagram

Finally, we will show you the effect that the “Dublin Web Conference” has on the Irish and international tourism sector.
There was a time when people used to travel around the world with guidebooks, maps and different awkward printed material; that era has died out.

Mobile apps have become tourism enterprises' best ally, both to acquire new customers as well as to retain old ones.

Apps can advertise certain areas, in the case of the ‘Visit Dublin’ App by Geo Guides Ltd. it is our capital city Dublin. Through this app you can listen to a great variety of guides of the city free of charge; from "Viking and Medieval Dublin" to “Rock’n’Stroll".
Rock’n’Stroll: An Example

Dublin’s answer to the Hollywood Walk of Fame! Installed a few years ago, plaques highlight Dublin buildings where music history happened. We are not talking Handel’s „Messiah“ here (which was first heard in Dublin), we are talking U2’s „Desire“.

In an effort to get the younger visitors moving, Dublin invented the Rock’n’Stroll, a self-guided tour through music history.

Functions

Dublin Tourism’s Visit Dublin application is a whole new way to use your phone. Simply by pointing your phone while you are walking, you can find rich information on the places you see around you.

VisitDublin uses GeoGuide’s powerful pointing technology to perform directionally filtered searches so that you get just the information you are looking for quickly and easily.

- Point your phone down a street to see if there is anything good to eat in that direction.
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

- Point your phone at a building to learn its history.
- Bookmark your car and be guided right back to it after your meeting by map, arrow or AR in camera view.
- Look for special offers only when you want them.
- Whether you are in familiar territory or off on an adventure, VisitDublin from Dublin Tourism is the perfect companion. Save your favorite searches. Find things you need quickly. Satisfy your curiosity instantly. Explore new worlds securely. Now you can Surf the Whole Wide World!

This app allows tourists to acquire the full experience of the area both culturally and historically and at the same time sustains the “Big Smoke’s” cultural heritage. The app has brief information pages on all Dublin's attractions and shows their location on a map also. Another interesting aspect of this app is the facility which allows local businesses to post ‘Special Offers’. Throughout the country many towns and cities are also setting up apps of similar style which can only be seen in a positive manner as it is a very effective manner of marketing.
Aer Lingus:

Aer Lingus Group Plc is the national flag carrier of Ireland. It operates a fleet of mostly Airbus aircraft serving Europe, North Africa, Turkey and North America. It is Ireland’s oldest extant airline, and its second largest, after low-cost rival Ryanair. The airline’s head office is located on the grounds of Dublin Airport in Swords, Dublin, Ireland.

Formed in 1936, Aer Lingus is a former member of the Oneworld airline alliance, which it left on 31 March 2007. While it is not part of an alliance, the airline has codeshares with Oneworld, Star Alliance and SkyTeam members, as well as interline agreements with Etihad Airways, JetBlue Airways and United Airlines. Aer Lingus has a hybrid business model, operating a mixed fare service on its European and North African routes and full service, two-class flights on transatlantic routes.

The airline’s primary mission is to connect Ireland with the world and the world to Ireland by offering its customers the best product in the Irish airline market to customers at a competitive price.

Aer Lingus also provides cargo transportation services to the UK, Continental Europe and the USA. Aer Lingus is committed to serving airports located at convenient, central locations which enhance connectivity for customers. This
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

airport selection is offered at more competitive prices than most other legacy carriers. Aer Lingus further enhances connectivity options to the USA, Canada and the UK, through its airline partners; Stobart Air (operating Aer Lingus Regional), Jetblue Airways and United Airlines. It is now easier than ever to connect to continental US destinations with the UK, Europe and Ireland via JFK New York, Boston or Chicago.

The App:

“Now you can have all your travel needs at your finger tips with the new free Aer Lingus App. Whether it’s planning trips, checking-in or checking flight status, accessing your travel information on the go is more convenient than ever!”

Blurb from App Store

Aer Lingus is a pioneering Irish aviation company which is using a mobile app to minimise waste and maximise customer ease. Through using this app, one
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

can use their smartphone or mobile device both to check in and as a boarding pass on all flights. To avail of this mobile app, passengers must provide identification through the form of a Booking Reference number, then provide baggage details and they will be given a code that can be scanned off the screen of their mobile device. This cuts down greatly on paper use and waste associated with traditional check-in methods make the company more environmentally sustainable. The app also hosts the ability to book flights, plan trips and receive on-flight changes or special offers.
Increase in Company Profit:

An increase in revenue has been seen within Aer Lingus since the release of their app aiding the companies financially sustainability as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>€million unless otherwise stated</th>
<th>31 December 2013</th>
<th>31 December 2012</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers - mainline operations ('000s)</td>
<td>9,625</td>
<td>9,653</td>
<td>(0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average fare revenue per passenger (€)</td>
<td>121.62</td>
<td>120.15</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average fare revenue per seat (€)</td>
<td>90.43</td>
<td>88.70</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>1,425.1</td>
<td>1,393.3</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating costs (excluding net exceptional items)</td>
<td>(1,364.0)</td>
<td>(1,324.2)</td>
<td>(3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating profit before net exceptional items</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>(11.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit before tax</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>(2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free cash flow</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Sheet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross cash</td>
<td>897.4</td>
<td>908.5</td>
<td>(1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross debt</td>
<td>(477.6)</td>
<td>(531.6)</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash</td>
<td>419.8</td>
<td>376.9</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Company background:

Facebook is a social networking service launched in February 2004, owned and operated by Facebook. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow Harvard University student Eduardo Saverin. The website’s membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area, the Ivy League, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United States, corporations, and by September 2006, to everyone of age 13 and older to make a group with a valid email address.

Facebook however, actually started out in theory on October 23, 2003 when Zuckerberg launched Facemash.com. Facemash allowed visitors (basically his Harvard classmates) to compare two student pictures side-by-side to let them decide who was "hot" and who was "not". Mark was able to populate the site with student pictures by hacking into Harvard’s database. However, days later outraged students demanded Zuckerberg shut down the site. But one thing was clear, people like to go on the Internet and check out pictures of their
friends. What’s not clear was Zuckerberg was also working on another site called HarvardConnection.com for Cameron Winklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss and Divya Narendra who later sued Mark for allegedly stealing their idea with the creation of Facebook.

Shortly after their launch the buzz about Facebook grew and eventually they got discovered by Sean Parker (the former co-founder of Napster) who began to advise informally. By June 2004, Facebook received its first private investment from Peter Theil, the founder of PayPal, for $500,000 in exchange for 10.2% of the company. Sean Parker also became president then of the newly incorporated Facebook. They continually rolled Facebook out across college campuses and by December 30, 2004 over one million members were registered!

Number of users:

The social network has now passed 1.23 billion monthly active users. Of those, daily active users passed 757 million on average during December 2013, and
the number of monthly active mobile users hit 945 million. Below is a graph showing the number of users per quarter.
The App:

The Facebook App plays a vital role in tourism both through tourists sharing tales of their experiences with friends and also for companies to advertise what they have on offer. The highly popular social media app Facebook has its international headquarters in Ireland. In today’s modern, technologically savvy world, it is rare to see a restaurant, hotel or tourist attraction without an active page on the app. Through social media, they can promote special offers and reach a wide group people with upcoming events. The app also offers its users the chance to “tag” themselves in any location they have visited. This is great for advertising places through other peoples' first hand experiences and gives an honest review of the location in question. Also all attractions’ websites have a one-click button to ‘share’ their business on this app. On their site, one can book the companies’ service; whether it is hotel bookings, restaurant reservations or tickets to tourist attractions. These online purchases boost income and create an easy method of purchasing and booking.
Trust and credibility are the standards by which relationships are measured. The rise of social media has reinforced the importance of trust. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are built on a foundation of trust and allow people to be selective about the information they share online.

• But social media has also distorted the notion of trust. Many marketers, in their rush to monetize Facebook, Twitter and other sites, have placed a premium on the number of friends and followers people have in their networks. Twitter itself has encouraged this approach by rolling out a service that allows marketers to essentially pay Twitter to help them build their follower bases.

• Most people’s decisions are shaped by word-of-mouth input, whether online or offline, from a tight circle of close friends and relatives. Marketers seeking to maximize their reach should focus on the quality of social network connections rather than their sheer size.

• One in seven social networking users across Europe agree that “I pass on recommendations of products and services to friends and family”. This is therefore still rather a niche activity but as the penetration of social networking grows, as well as frequency and longevity of users, we expect this activity to become more common.
Below are some charts showing some statistics about peoples’ sharing habits:

**Social networking websites: “I pass on recommendations of products and services to friends and family**

Amongst social networking sites users, by country

![Chart showing sharing habits](chart)

*Source: nVision Research
Base: 120-780 per country aged 15+, users of a social networking site, 2009*

**People share online content for a number of reasons**

*“Because I find it interesting/entertaining,” “Because I think it will be helpful to the recipients,” and “To get a laugh” are the top three reasons for sharing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Reasons</th>
<th>Primary Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because I find it interesting/entertaining</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I think it will be helpful to the recipients</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a laugh</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To generate thoughtful ideas or discussion</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote my ideals or beliefs</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help people get to know me</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If people like the content, they are likely to share it

- News about a family member or friends: 81%
- Family pictures or video: 80%
- Funny videos: 63%
- Coupons/discounts: 54%
- News articles and blog posts (e.g., CNN, NY Times): 53%
- Advice articles and blog posts (e.g., personal or business tips): 52%
- Music/entertainment video: 45%
- Educational videos: 40%
- Contests: 31%
- Sports news and highlights articles and blog posts (e.g., ESPN...): 29%
- Sports news and highlights videos (e.g., ESPN, Sports Illustrated): 27%
- Entertainment news /celebrity gossip videos (e.g., TMZ, Perez...): 24%
- Entertainment/celebrity gossip articles and blog posts (e.g., TMZ...): 23%
Mobile Applications in Irish Tourism

Instagram:

In addition some tourists choose to post pictures of their travels on the “Instagram” app which is a photo sharing app owned by Facebook. At its most basic, Instagram is a social networking app which allows its users to share pictures and videos with their friends. The app can be downloaded for free from the usual app stores and takes pride of place on many a young person’s (and older!) smart phone.

These pictures can entice their “followers” to visit these sites and boost tourist numbers. This personal advertisement sustains tourist revenue and also sustains and spreads our cultural heritage through people’s descriptions of their experiences. We believe it would be an advantage to businesses to advertise a word to “hashtag” when posting pictures of the location on the app which would mean if an Instagram user searched the location all pictures would be on view.

Instagram is among a breed of smart phone apps which have tapped into the creative, image-base online life of young people.
The Dublin Web Summit

Web Summit is a technology-industry conference held in Dublin, Ireland since 2010. The topic of the conference is centred on internet technology and the audience is a mix of CEOs and founders of tech start-ups together with a range of people from across the global technology industry, as well as related industries.

The event is held over three days. Attendance at the conference has grown from 500 attendees in 2010, to over 10,000 in 2013 from 78 countries.

Web Summit is run by Ci, a company that runs events throughout the world including F.ounders Dublin, and F.ounders New York.

Web Summit 2014 was held over three days and comprised of 4 Primary Summits; Machine, Enterprise, Marketing and Builders. Organisers announced 2014’s Web Summit attracted over 22,000 attendees.
Advantages of the Web Summit

There are countless benefits of hosting a summit of this calibre in a country both for the tourism industry and for the economy.

It is reported that visitors to the event spend upwards of €10,000,000. The €100m is spent by the large number of overseas guests attending the event. Apart from the main events being held at the RDS in Ballsbridge, a total of 87 venues are used across the city, with as many as 13,000 hotel rooms and B&Bs being booked well in advance.

However, despite the huge business that is being created by the influx of foreign visitors, hotels around the city have been criticised for the apparent inflation of prices during the event.

Also, the event brings many businesses to the country which gives Ireland a chance to advertise itself as a place to do business. Young entrepreneurs can learn from advice given by many seasoned professionals and also look for investment in their ideas.
Tourism is rapidly changing and conventional tourism is forced to meet tougher requirements. Sustainable tourism is tourism that can be maintained over the long term because it results in a net benefit to the area in which it takes place.

“Information is the lifeblood of tourism”- true, as tourism proves to be an extremely information intensive, complex and dynamic industry. The internet has become established as the most important medium of information that users turn to when preparing a journey. If a hotel aims at remaining competitive, a resort to the web, and especially direct marketing via the internet, is inevitable. It is imperative that the right information is communicated to the pre-defined target group at the right time via the right channel.

Progression is inevitable in all walks of life and none more so than in technology. Gone are the days of meeting face-to-face, personal interactions, telephone conversations and computer based browsing for that ideal weekend break. Welcome to the mobile application era- the “app”; the whole world at your fingertips!

Since the 1960’s tourism has been an undeniable driver of economic and social development for many developed countries resulting in an increase in GDP and employment in many sectors. The tourism industry is facing a number of challenges which require all players in the value chain to embrace innovation and technology in their business in order to boost competitiveness and productivity.

To conclude- “embrace change or get left behind”; Look to the future through the eyes of technology or end up living your life in the past.
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