Chapter 85

Augmented Reality for Tourism Service Promotion in Iran as an Emerging Market

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ABSTRACT

Recently tourism service industry is becoming one of the fastest growing industries in the world that has a positive impact on global economy. Tourism service industry growth in some emerging markets such as Iran is faster due to the expansion of Iran's international relationships. This growth also positively affects tourism service demand. Augmented Reality (AR) is a relatively new technology that allows tourists to combine their experience with technology and place it in real life. It also helps tourism service providers to promote their services. This technology can attract more tourism service consumers by enhancing their experiences that leads to increased revenue. This conceptual chapter explains AR technology and its potential possibilities to promote tourism service market in Iran. Findings determines AR as a better accepted tool for tourism service industry promotion in Iran as an emerging economy as supported by the recent development of international relations.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism service industry has a very huge impact on the economy and social development of a country in the form of contributing directly and indirectly to the GDP, creating jobs, building new hotels, purchasing new aircrafts, opening new businesses, protecting the attractions, historical and cultural heritage as well as influencing on the amount of activities and investment in this industry (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). To help in growth of tourism service industry and national economy, the governments in emerging countries have started spending some of the collective taxes and budget on promoting the

aviation, services, resort area, marketing, security, administration and technology related to the tourism industry to attract more tourists to the country (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). The application of innovative technologies has managed to attract considerable attention of the concerned authorities. One of the most recent technologies that can greatly be used to promote the tourism service marketing and in turn to increase revenue and enhance tourism consumers' experience is use of "Augmented Reality"(AR). AR is said as a revolution in technology that has a huge impact on the tourism service industry. It can help the tourists to plan their trip and prepare themselves for an ideal and exciting experience. AR brings the technology and digital development underneath the coating of reality and makes the experience much more interactive and impressive (Augment, 2016). A good number of research studies affirm the effective application of AR in some key knowledge areas of the tourism service industry as: tourism education (Hassan & Jung, 2016), tourism destination formation and promotion (Hassan, in press; Hassan, & Shabani, in press; Rahimi et al., in press), tourist experience (Hassan & Ramkissoon, in press) and digital tourism marketing (Dadwal & Hassan, 2014; Hassan & Rahimi, 2016). Hence this chapter critically explains AR and its contributing roles to promote tourism service industry in an emerging market (EMs) such as Iran.

AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

Augmented Realty (AR) is very parallel to Virtual Reality (VR) technology and proximity exists between these two innovative technologies. Whereas, VR fully immerses user senses in a world that rather exists in the digital format, on the other hand AR pulls the current real world and projects digital imagery with sound into this. Both VR and AR can be grouped on the mediated reality range where a computer system updates the users' reality perception against the real world. AR is rather an updated technology that combines reality with imagery supported by the heads up displays or the Global Positioning System (GPS). The heads-up displays are very often seen in few cars or aircrafts showing the users things like distance to an actual target and the user's present speed or GPS position remain as the form of AR. In theory, AR is quite interactive, sophisticated and spatially conscious application of the idea where video or 3D models as digital objects are projected on the real view as they were present there. AR for the users comes with sensors as camera, components of computer and a display device for creating the illusion of virtual objects in the present world.

The present-day Smartphones are normally equipped with these components and thus becomes the most popular devices to accommodate commercially viable AR applications. In principle, AR device search for a specific target and that can be anything. In most cases, this is a 2D image as printed on a movie poster or similar object. Once, the AR application can recognise the target with its camera, AR applications processes the image and augments it in few ways with pictures and sound. Thus, the user views movie poster spirals too real and thus starts playing a trailer of the film. If the user keeps on looking at the poster through the display window, the user sees a reality that is augmented than plain old vanilla reality. With the use of smart algorithms and relevant sensors like gyroscopes and accelerometers, the device can retain the augmented tools aligning with the real-world image. The use of Smartphone, tablet or computer have opened the 'magic window' for the world that is augmented. The relay of digital information to eyes of the users can be achieved in many other ways. Digital imagery can be projected straightforward on the physical elements as known as projection mapping. This projection can bring

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