Chapter 2
The Urbis Prototype Development:
A Touristic Guide Application

Ivaldir Honório de Farias Junior
UFPE University, Brazil

Nelson Galvão de Sá Leitão Júnior
UFPE University, Brazil

Marcelo Mendonça Teixeira
UFRPE University, Brazil

Jarbas Espíndola Agra Junior
UNICAP University, Brazil

ABSTRACT

Currently, tourists spend a lot of time planning their trips because they need to make the most of every moment. In this sense, technology has been a great ally, especially when performing and adapting this planning in the event of some unforeseen event during the journey. And the emergence of distinct types of mobile devices was presented as an opportunity to improve the experience of tourism significantly. In this context, this chapter aims to identify the main computing needs to a mobile application to support the promotion of tourist sites for the traveler. The authors adopted a literature review as the research methodology. The main result of this chapter is the proposal of the Urbis prototype, an application that aims to help tourists to know better the cities they are visiting, even in the absence of local information or a specialized tour guide.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5270-3.ch002

INTRODUCTION

The constant development of information technology has driven major changes in modern society, resulting in changes in economic, political and social levels (de Andrade, 2006) (Anjos, Paula Souza, & Vieira Ramos, 2006). It is common to consider that technology is one of the progress engines, thereby providing the development of human knowledge (Pinheiro, Silveira, & Bazzo, 2007). Therefore, information technology turns out to be one of the main tools that companies have to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the market, ensuring their competitive advantage (Morgan, Translate, & Summers, 2008) (Neves, Semprebom, & Lima, 2011). One of the productive sectors starting to feel the changes brought about by the popularization of the Internet and the modernization of information systems is tourism. Vicentin and Hoppen define the impact of the information age in tourism businesses and their customers as follows:

For the customer this type of business, the tourism, when is still not experienced, it can only be perceived as a set of available information. Thus, coupled with the fact that the Internet is an information technology that enables widely available information quickly and easily, allowing the emergence of numerous websites specializing in tourism marketing on the Internet. These sites (companies) may be causing changes in the business models of those involved in tourism in Brazil. (Vicentin & Hoppen, 2002)

The information technology revolution is causing a profound impact on the way that trips are marketed, distributed, sold and delivered, simply because the business covering the travel is formed by information (Vassos, 1998). It is worth mentioning that the information is essential for tourism in this new information age. In this context, Bissoli states:

Tourist activity generates a great amount of information that has importance and strategic value in the tourist business, meaning that information should be treated as an element of organizational strategy. (Bissoli, 2001)

At this moment, the customer that was once exclusively bound to information coming from travel agencies, now has more power, interactivity, and flexibility, accessing the information and the product more directly and clearly (Anjos et al., 2006). It can be observed that in the last decade, the growing trend of the new traveler of being always connected. The emergence of different types of mobile devices is presented as an opportunity to improve the tourist's experience (Buhalis & Law, 2008). This work aims to contribute to improving the promotion of sights through