Today’s consumers are increasingly in search for experiences that engage them in a personal way [21] and create value for them [11]. The creation of rich and memorable experiences represents a key concept in tourism research and practice. At the moment, two major changes have been challenging our current understanding of the tourism experience. First, the traditional experience economy is increasingly replaced by the concept of experience co-creation, which recognises that consumers are becoming more active in co-creating their experiences [22]. Second, more recently, it has become evident that experiences become increasingly dominated by one factor, namely information and communication technologies (ICTs) [32]. As consumers are more empowered and use technologies during their travels, they now can become the central part in co-creating richer experiences and added value [10].

**Significance**

Experiences are the core of the tourism and hospitality industry. Businesses in the tourism industry therefore seek to create unique and personalised experiences that meet the needs and wants of contemporary consumers who are looking for something meaningful. While the importance of experiences is unquestioned, the understanding of how to use technology to create more personalised and valuable experiences is limited in tourism theory and practice. Information and communication technologies have had a significant impact on the entire tourism industry [6]. They have transformed the way tourism products and services are produced and consumed [29] and tourism experiences are created [31]. ICTs have become an integral part of the entire customer journey, i.e., before, during and after travel, throughout which tourists use technologies to generate richer experiences [10] and are empowered to co-create more personal experiences [22]. Recent developments, including an increasing consumer empowerment [22], the rise of prosumers [26], a growing recognition of co-creation [22] and a number of possibilities due to the developments in the field of technology [33]; have contributed to substantial change in the conventional creation of tourism and hospitality experiences.

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1 This article is downloaded from the IFITT e-Tourism Wikipedia: http://www.ifitt.org/resources/wiki
**History**

The term experience has been first noted in the 1960s and numerous definitional approaches in different scientific disciplines have emerged since then. In the particular context in tourism, experience have been defined as a sensation resulting from interaction [12], as an outcome of social participation [17], or the moment of value creation when tourism production and consumption meet [1]. In this subjective process, the individual consumer is emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually engaged and the experience [19] is significant enough to be translated into long-term memory [15]. Following decades of theoretical development, the managerial interest in the experiences has emerged with the experience economy, which recognised the importance of delivering experiences, as conventional products and services have become replicated, interchangeable, and commoditised [18]. The idea of providing consumers with compelling experiences [21] and thereby creating added value for them [11], was proposed as the key to competitive advantage and success.

In recent years, the experience economy theory has been increasingly criticised [3]. The creation of experiences has traditionally been a one-directed approach, meaning that experiences are created by the company for the consumer. Nowadays, consumers have become increasingly informed, active and powerful which has was caused by a major change in the industrial system [24]. This has led to the emergence of a “prosumer society”; a condition where consumers are actively involved in both the process of both consumption and production [26]. Although the concept of prosumption has existed for many years, it has particularly flourished through the social changes brought by the Internet and the Web 2.0 [26].

With the empowerment of the Internet, consumers are no longer static in the market but now decide the way they want to receive and respond to information [14]. Thus, prosumers have become more encouraged than ever before to play an active part in shaping the nature of their consumption through engaging in the production stage. Co-creation builds on this very principle and puts the focus back on consumers, their needs and wants and the question of how companies can meet these [24]. This has transformed the company-consumer relationship [4]; the individual human being, rather than the company, is viewed as the new starting point of the experience [3].

As early as 1998, Pine and Gilmore remarked that emerging technologies would generate new types of experiences via tools such as interactive games, chat rooms or virtual realities that significantly change tourism industry [6; 27]. The explosion of the Web 2.0 and social media tools at the beginning of the 21st century has turned the Internet into a massive space of social networking [28]. For instance, websites, portable city guides, travel guides, virtual life or hotel room enhancement [3] are all cutting-edge examples of technology enhancing tourism experiences. Social media sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter or Flickr [7] now enable DMOs and tourists to build a platform to interact, comment and share their
experiences, and build a sense of experience community and co-create added value together [13]. Further, the development of mobile technologies has caused one of the most significant changes to tourists experiencing travel. Due to their constant connectivity, tourists can now access information anywhere and anytime [9]. By doing so, mobile technologies have led to a transformation of tourist behaviour, as tourists are changing from ‘sit and search’ to ‘roam and receive’ [20]. Emerging mobile applications, such as Location Based Services (LBS), Context Based Services (CBS) and Augmented Reality (AR) are predicted to find wide application within the tourism industry and the creation of experiences in the coming years.

Industry Examples

Some cutting-edge examples of businesses in the tourism industry, facilitating ICT enhanced tourism experiences are highlighted below:

- PixMeAway
- Australian Airports NFC Service
- KLM Social Seating
- AirBnb
  - [https://www.airbnb.co.uk/](https://www.airbnb.co.uk/)
- VisitBritain Facebook Page
- Amazing Thailand Destination Management Organization
  - [http://www.tourismthailand.org/home](http://www.tourismthailand.org/home)
- Hotel Lugano Dante
- Sol Melia Twitter Engagement
- Inamo Restaurant
- TripAdvisor
  - [http://www.tripadvisor.de/](http://www.tripadvisor.de/)
References


Web Links

For more information on cutting-edge research on ICT enhanced tourism experiences, see the link below.

http://blogs.bournemouth.ac.uk/etourismlab/