

TDJ
ANNUAL

ISSN No, 09757376
Vol. 15, No. 1, 2017

Tourism Development Journal

(An International Research Journal)



**Institute of Vocational (Tourism & Hospitality) Studies,
H. P. University, Shimla - 5**

Tourism Development Journal

(ISSN-09757376)

Vol. 15, No.1, 2017

Patron

Prof. R.S. Chauhan

Vice Chancellor

H.P. University, Shimla

Chief Editor

Sonia Khan

Associate Professor, Tourism

Email:khansonai@hotmail.com

Editorial Board

Dallen J. Timothy Arrizona State University, USA	Roy Ballantyne University of Queensland, Australia
David Airey University of surrey, Guildford	Shalini Singh Brock university, Canada
Geoffery Wall University of Waterloo, Canada	Sachio Asahi Yamaguchi University, Japan
H.L. Theuns Maastricht, The Netherlands	Sandeep Kulshrestha IITTM, Gwalior
Erdogan Ekiz King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia	Bill Xu The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Kaye Chon Hong Kong Polytechnic University	S.C. Bagri H.N.B. Garhwal University
Kevin Hannam University of Sunderland, UK	Tej Vir Singh CTRD, Lucknow
Khoon, Y. Koh Central Connecticut State University, USA	Wu Bihu Peking University
Manjula Chaudhry Kurukshetra University	Stuart Jauncey EAHM, Dubai
Larry Bridwell Pace university, USA	Stephen Earnhart, SHMS University Centre, Switzerland

Associate Editors

Prof. Chander Mohan Parsheera, Director, IVS

Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh

Prof. S.P. Bansal

Asst Prof. Nitin Vyas

**Tourism Administration, Institute of Vocational Studies, H.P. University, Shimla
171005, India**

Editorial

The global tourism and hospitality industry continues to show a remarkable performance with international tourist arrivals crossing the 1.2 billion tourists mark. While new destinations are emerging on the travel map of the world, the already established ones are firmly consolidating their positions with innovations and new product development. However, regardless of the rising performance graph, the industry is continuously faced with challenges that pose threats for its survival. The present day tourism industry is engaged in a fierce combat with several extraneous forces like global terrorism, climate issues, epidemics, frequent natural calamities, and other internal challenges related to human resource, innovations and competitiveness, among others. While the shadow of such forces remains permanently cast upon the industry, at the ground level the sector is undeterred in its efforts to keep flourishing further.

With the aim of providing an international perspective on concerns being faced by the industry around the world, the present issue of Tourism Development Journal brings forth selected research from various countries covering a wide array of tourism and hospitality issues.

In the lead paper, Walter Jamieson and Michelle Jamieson present an elaborate case making suggestions to the destination management organizations for incorporating the aspect of ‘interpretation’ into the larger destination planning process, in order to enhance visitor experiences. Okpalaeké and Enemuó have taken up the case of hotel industry in Nigeria in the State of Imo, with the aim of exploring the incorporation of tourism research in the building a corporate image of hotels. They discover that research based in ‘public relations’ is significantly crucial for helping hotel managers build a good image of their hotel property. Marco Martín’s tangent of research is inclined towards the fast growing form of ‘Gastronomy tourism’. His discussion touches upon the salient features of gastronomy tourism as a form of cultural tourism to add value to the cultural product of the destinations. The ‘employability skills’ required of hospitality students for intake into the industry have been identified in the study carried out by Nor Rabiátul Adawiyah Nor Azam and Asmahany Ramely. Their research results indicate that strong leadership skills, good communication skills and the ability to manage conflicts are the most demanded skills for employment into the ‘culinary’ field of hospitality and that institutions imparting education in culinary arts should lay emphasis on developing these skills in students for their employment in the service industry. Antonios Maniatis provides an interesting perspective to travel and tourism by discussing tourism with respect to the ‘right to pursuit of happiness’ as one of the unalienable human rights, with special reference to Italian tourism law. Stanley Makindi and Urmilla Bob provide a case of ‘Wildlife tourism’ in Africa. Centred around Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya, they have studied perception of local

community towards wildlife tourism. The results indicate that largely local communities were happy with the conservation efforts of the park management, however they suggested that support should be sought for educational programmers, social amenities, employment and business opportunities for the community. Discussing about tourism in the South East Asian countries in increasingly competitive times, destinations around the world are continuously trying to survive and retain their appeal in the global tourist market, Walter and Michelle Jamieson suggest to destination planners and managers, a number of capacity building initiatives for effectively developing and managing responsible urban tourism destinations, particularly in the popular South East Asian countries. In the final paper Asmahany Ramely and Basri Rashid discuss the importance of organizing and hosting events at a destination especially to avoid the decline stage of the life cycle. They propose 'four point destination rejuvenation' principles for use of organized events in promoting and rejuvenating destinations at the declining stage, with the aim of increasing longevity of the destinations.

With this diverse selection of research on different aspects from different countries, it is hoped that an interesting reading will be provided through this issue of the journal to researchers and practitioners of tourism and hospitality and will also stimulate further research that can be pertinent to enhancing this service sector.

Sonia Khan
Chief Editor

Tourism Development Journal

ISSN-09757376

Vol. 15, No.1, 2017

Contents

	Page No
1. Interpretation and Tourism Destination Planning and Management	1-15
- Walter Jamieson, Michelle Jamieson <i>The Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand</i> <i>Green Door Solutions, Honolulu, USA</i>	
2. Evaluation of Research Activities and Strategic Planning on the Corporate Image of Selected Hotels	16-28
- V.C. Okpalaeke and O.B. Enemuoh <i>Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria</i> <i>Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria</i>	
3. Status and Potential of Gastronomy as a Cultural Tourism Attraction	29-37
- Marco Martins <i>Agrarian School of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal</i>	
4. The Effectiveness of Employability Skills in Hospitality Education	38-48
- Nor Rabiatus Adawiyah Nor Azam and Asmahany Ramely <i>Universiti Utara Malaysia</i> <i>Universiti Utara Malaysia</i>	
5. The Right to Pursuit of Happiness and Italian Tourism Law	49-58
- Antonios Maniatis <i>University of Applied Sciences of Athens, Greece</i>	
6. The Perceptions of Local Communities towards Wildlife-Based Tourism: The Case of Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya	59-72
- Stanley, M. Makindi and Urmilla Bob <i>Egerton University, Kenya</i> <i>University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa</i>	

- 7. Developing the Capacity of Southeast Asian Urban Tourism Destination Planners and Managers** **73-92**
- Walter Jamieson, Michelle Jamieson
The Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand
Green Door Solutions, Bangkok, Thailand
- 8. Principles for Rejuvenating Tourism Destination through Organised Events** **93-104**
- Asmahany Ramely and Basri Rashid
Universiti Utara Malaysia
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Interpretation and Tourism Destination Planning and Management

Walter Jamieson, Michelle Jamieson

Abstract

The travel industry in Southeast Asia as elsewhere in the world must continue to adapt to new challenges: rapidly growing tourism numbers, evolving traveler motivations and the changing business environment. Increasingly, visitors are looking for more authentic, local experiences and want to leave a destination having an insight into the local culture and values. To meet this demand, destination planning and management must move its focus away from the physical manifestations of culture and experiences, to intangible aspects of culture and experiences based on a strategy of interpretation. Interpretation is the act of bringing meaning to an item, area or destination, while storytelling is a well-planned, designed and developed interpretive technique for piecing together the history, the present and the potential future. The planning and management challenge is to ensure that interpretation is incorporated into the larger context of destination planning and development at all levels. This article discusses the need for a stronger relationship between destination planning and interpretation.

Keywords: Tourism Planning, Interpretation, Destination Planning, Destination Management, Experience Development

Introduction

Consumer tourism research clearly indicates that many traveler demographic segments seek experiences that are authentic, locally based, provide them with an opportunity for self-development and help them understand the cultural, natural, economic and political settings that they visit. These travelers - sometimes known as experiential travelers or creative travelers - are looking for more than a whirlwind trip to a large city or a few days on the beach, being more motivated by collecting experiences than physical goods (Fitzsimmons, 2017; Gale, 2004).

It is well understood that longer stays and repeat visits generate significant economic benefits for attractions and destinations. When these travelers return home, they are more likely to tell friends about their experiences on social media - one of the most effective promotional tools

(Biesiada, 2016). Attractions and destinations also benefit greatly from ‘stay-cations’ that have become highly popular with millennials, and other travelers, looking for short getaways, even in their home city or area (Lane, 2017). These travelers present an interesting demographic and an economic growth opportunity. For them, a dynamic and immersive environment at a site or destination is a major advantage. It must be recognized that travelers, while interested in learning, consider themselves to be on vacation, not in school, and are usually not interested in becoming experts, but still desire to learn something about the place they are visiting (Gale, 2004).

In developing economies in Southeast Asia, the focus of the authors’ research and practice, it is recognized that destinations that respond to these travelers’ preferences are in a position of advantage. Recent tourism and destination plans in Southeast Asia typically develop tourism products - now seen as experiences - largely related to tangible interventions. They often neglect the intangible ideas at the core of visitors’ interests, and the nature, identity and structure of the destination (Tilkin, n/a). When reenactments, festivals and cultural events are presented, they often neglect to tell the story, or demonstrate the meaning or relevance of the presentations they portray.

Where there is interpretation, the task of interpretation is left to individual attractions (historic sites, museums, cultural villages, natural habitats etc.). In the Southeast Asian context, this interpretation is usually limited and, more often than not, does not make connections between the various dimensions of a destination or tell a comprehensive story. This article argues that tourism planners, destination managers and economic developers should recognize that professional interpretive design and planning can give a place (country or destination) a competitive edge, while also ensuring that visitors understand the place and respect its culture and nature.

If one of the objectives of destination planning and management is to ensure an engaged visitor, interpretation should be seen as an integral part of that planning and management (Interpret Europe, 2016). In addition, from a responsible tourism point of view, destinations and attractions have a societal obligation to ensure visitors leave with a higher level of knowledge and appreciation of that destination and its inhabitants (Moscardo, 2003). Through interpretation, visitors can be educated about the cultural, environmental and societal sensitivities of an area. This education can provide visitors with a sense of place and a feeling of connection to, and responsibility for, the area (Moscardo, 2003).

In this article, the nature of interpretation as it relates to tourism planning and development is explored and the interface between interpretation and planning and design is developed. This follows the authors’ long-standing

process of exploring the relationship between interpretation planning and the development process (Jamieson, 2001). It became evident early in this work that without effective interpretation and storytelling many historic districts, destinations, business development areas and other associated destinations were missing significant opportunities to increase the number of visitors and the subsequent economic development. Part of the practice that emanated from this insight, included resolving how to involve communities in the process (Jamieson, 1988).

This discussion of interpretation and tourism must be situated within the larger context of experience development, which is an essential part of destination planning and development. Increasingly, experience development is seen as an essential dimension of tourism and marketing strategies, but there is rarely discussion of how to develop these experiences, especially through interpretation.

Interpreters tend to come from the natural and heritage management fields, but are rarely involved in the larger tourism planning and development context. Similarly, planners do not see interpretation as an essential part of their mandate, creating a gap between planning, interpretation and meeting visitors' needs. Usually, dedicated interpreters have a mandate to accurately and comprehensively present a destination or attraction within a destination, while planners deal with a wider set of concerns including the role of tourism as a tool of economic development (WTTC, 2012). There is no thought to replace interpretive planners, but to demonstrate how those with specific knowledge of natural, cultural or living heritage can work with tourism planners to ensure a wide range of goals can be met through a thoughtful interpretive planning process. Tourism planners need to recognize that they play an essential role in providing platforms for interpretation, ensuring that spaces are conducive to storytelling, provide links between various sites and produced development and design guidelines that support an overall interpretive theme for a destination (Jamieson, 2006).

Given the partnership approach being taken in many tourism situations, a range of engaged stakeholders is key to telling a destination's story. For example, within the private sector, accommodation providers have a responsibility to ensure they provide a starting point for the visitor to explore and understand an area, while tour companies and guides can develop and deliver authentic and accurate stories about a destination or attraction. Local people are an important part of the overall tourism experience and need to be trained in interpretation and made aware of their essential role in creating an authentic experience. Governments have multiple responsibilities, in terms of developing themes and stories, ensuring their marketing and promotion

supports this story development and ensuring that interpretive initiatives are directed to areas most in need of authentic and responsible tourism.

Research and Development Context

As noted, the development of the interpretive dimensions of destination management is the result of applied research that a team of professionals, including the authors, carried out over a number of years. A project on the planning and management of attractions in Thailand led to a consultancy exploring the role of interpretation in the overall destination tourism planning process. As part of that work, the team developed an interpretive planning manual and delivered a series of courses for public officials, planners and managers at the local level. *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual* is referred to in this article and can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/2ni5Hfy>.

In addition, three case studies were carried out at various sites around Thailand examining prototypical situations. The first site was a development study center covering a large area from the mountains through agricultural lands to coastlines and the sea. This was created to research natural systems, specifically marine production, irrigation, agriculture and mangrove reforestation. The interpretation of this attraction is a combination of stories about the ecosystem. The second site is an ancient Hindu temple built on top of an extinct volcano as a shrine to the god Shiva. The site has a variety of interpretation techniques, integrating newer technologies such as an augmented reality mobile application. The third site is a museum, which recently carried out a renovation and used an outsourced company to design and produce the new interpretation techniques used. It is important to note that the museum, while using new techniques, is now having technical issues since the staff are not adequately trained in the new technologies. All three sites present challenges and opportunities: A lack of effective interpretation techniques and designs makes it difficult for visitors to understand central themes and stories.

- ★ Personnel lack the necessary language and interpretation skills. Many are drawn from ecological or historical technical areas where visitor education and management are not a priority.
- ★ There are limited resources for maintenance and training.
- ★ There is confusion between attractions' interpretation and management objectives, resulting in a lack of clear vision for the overall management and interpretation of sites.
- ★ In some of the more remote areas, where limited Internet access is available, Internet based interpretation techniques have been developed without consideration of connection reliability.

- * Government regulations prevent certain sites from using the techniques best suited to the site or its visitors.
- * Budgets frequently affect the ability of a site or destination to reach its full potential.

In the discussions and group work it was seen that these challenges could be overcome with better quality planning and management.

Defining Interpretation within the Tourism Planning Context

In the same way that translators interpret across languages, destinations and attractions can interpret their attributes to be meaningful across cultures. Interpretation is a useful tool for tourism destination management, and can be used to encourage respect and appropriate behavior from travelers and promote feelings of pride and awareness within a community (Moscardo, 2003).

Developing an interpretation program puts destinations in control of the way they are presented and perceived. Interpretation not only makes travelers' visits richer, but also gives attractions, municipalities and communities a tool with which to manage and control tourism and travelers (Jamieson, 1998). A complete interpretive plan can also help regulate travelers. If, for example, there are places or ceremonies considered to be private or inappropriate for travelers, site managers have the right to decide which sites and activities are open to the public.

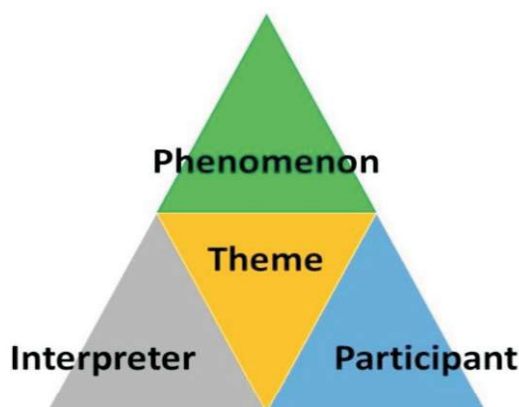
Defining interpretation is a difficult task, given the many perspectives on what interpretation can be. In 1871, John Muir began to discuss the development of nature conservation and first used the term 'interpretation' in this context. One of the most holistic definitions is from Freeman Tilden who, in his ground breaking *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957), envisaged quality heritage interpretation as having six principles:

- I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- II. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
- IV. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

- V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
- VI. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program (Tilden, 1957).

Interpretation can be represented by the interpretive triangle (Figure 1). The four basic qualities, shown in Figure 1 are: “to turn phenomena into experiences (phenomenon); to offer paths to deeper meaning (theme); to foster respect for all heritage (interpreter); and to provoke resonance in participants (participant)” (Ludwig, 2015, p.11).

Figure 1: Interpretive Triangle



Source: Figure adapted from Tilden, n/a, p.15 and Ludwig, 2015, p.11.

Interpretation is not just a glossy brochure, appropriate signage, and a well-edited video; it is the art of telling the story of an attraction. The “story” is a collection of selected facts and experiences which have an emotional and sensory meaning. All five senses can be used to enhance the visitor’s experience of the environment. For example, the audience may be directed to feel the cool marble of a temple floor, smell a distillery or market, and hear the cries of street vendors. Too often, the sense of sight is relied on exclusively when appreciating a new location, even though all senses are normally used in understanding an environment (Kim et al., 2015).

One measure of successful interpretation is the ability to turn everyday realities into interesting activities. In Thailand, an interpretive project run by

the Thai Volunteer Service, developed experiences that highlights daily life in several villages. Travelers have the opportunity to participate in activities such as grinding corn, working the fields, picking fruit, catching crabs, or learning cooking techniques. In the villages participating in this project, there are no temples or archaeological sites to draw travelers, but the project has worked to develop other resources from the village, the experiences of daily life. There are emotions and reactions that travelers feel and experience when immersed in the daily life of a local village, quite different to visiting a poorly interpreted temple (Jamieson, 2006).

In order to interpret a destination and its attractions in a way visitors can relate to, it is important to determine who those visitors are. In fact, depending on how the interpretive program is planned, a destination or attraction is able to have an influence on the types of travelers it attracts. Knowing the type of visitor helps determine what kind of interpretive techniques will be used (Veverka, 1998).

When determined what interpretive techniques to use, national governments and commercial groups such as tour companies, may want to choose a highly symbolic or political theme at the expense of popular forms of cultural expression of locally defined importance. Ideally, to ensure representation, all stakeholders should be consulted and feelable to participate in the interpretive planning process.

Interpretation Planning and Design Process

An important aspect of the interpretive planning process is coordinating with private companies and government agencies that have a stake in using interpretation and storytelling as a way of positioning their products and services or encouraging economic development. Stakeholders can be national governments, cultural ornatural environment agencies, economic development experts etc. There is great value in tapping into the imagination and creativity of others. The nature of interpretive team composition is explored in *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual*.

Storytelling is a collective responsibility, given that each stakeholder brings a different perspective and set of objectives to the process. Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication and is an honored tradition for humans. People tell stories to share ideas, beliefs, values and traditions. It continues to be an effective communication tool, especially as it explainsthe significance, history and culture of a site or area. Stories should bring creative approaches to interpretation. They have the ability to inspire people to explore topics, themes, or cultural or historical events. Storytelling does not

need to be in the form of words but can be created through pictures, objects, video or even hieroglyphs that connect the audience with the subject.

Typical interpretive planning includes a number of steps, as shown in Figure 2. It must be recognized that if innovation and creativity are to guide the interpretive planning and development process, there need to be opportunities for testing and prototyping - tourism planners and urban and city planners are familiar with this process (Jamieson, 1988). The ideal outcome is that interpretive planning concerns are being incorporated into the larger planning process. Due to space limitations of this article, the steps are identified and elaborated on in *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual*.

Figure 2: Typical Interpretive Planning Process



Source: Walter Jamieson

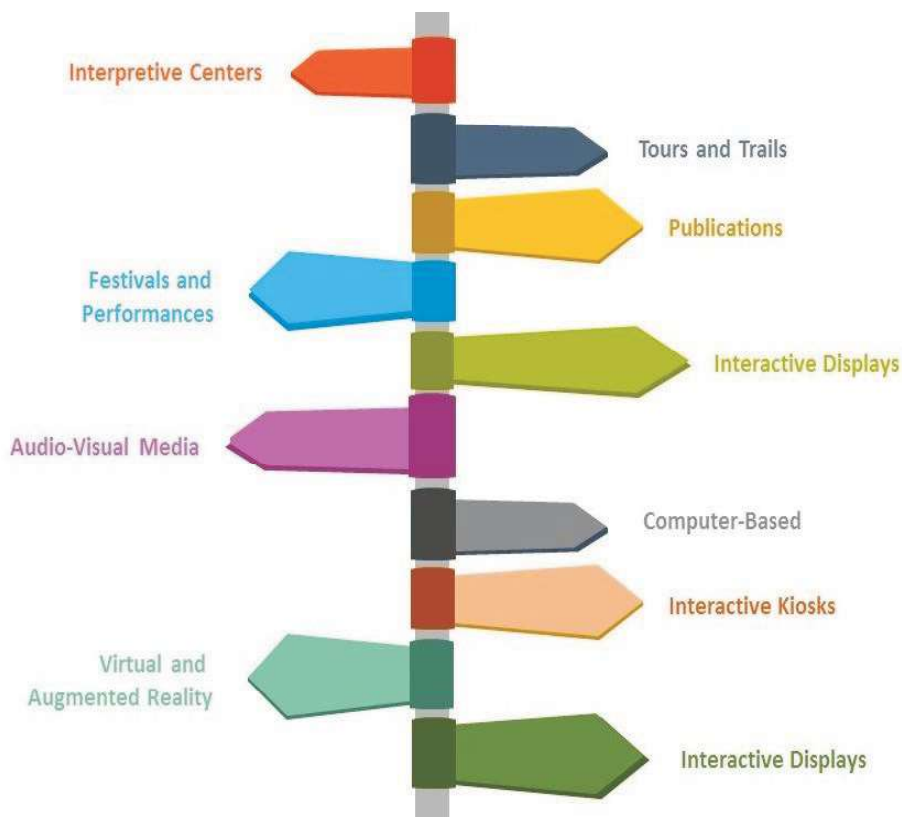
Essential to this process is developing metrics to measure success not only in terms of generating increased visitor numbers and revenue but in terms of meeting the overall goals of destinations and sites. This can be determined from a number of sources, including assessment of the accessibility of the physical attributes and stories of a destination or attraction. The assessment can include measuring the effectiveness in reaching people of different cultures and origins, not only in terms of language but also in terms of the necessary cultural, social and economic context. Finally, are the visitors able to emotionally connect with the story being told? Were they able to leave the

site or destination with a deeper understanding of the theme that was identified by the destination or attraction?

Interpretation Possibilities

There are a range of ways the interpretive planner and the tourism planner can tell the story of a destination. Figure 3 shows a range of possibilities (not an exhaustive list) available to tourism and interpretive planners. These are fully explored in *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual*. The authors take an in-depth look into newer technology based techniques which are changing the way interpretation is being delivered. While more traditional techniques – interpretive centers, tours and trails, publications - are still very relevant in delivering information and telling the story of destinations and attractions, the opportunities for a fully immersive experience, through virtual and augmented reality along with some mobile-based applications, are key to developing interpretation that is relevant now and into the future.

Figure 3: Interpretive Techniques and Approaches



Each destination and attraction has a specific set of objectives and constraints. In order to effectively interpret a destination, the techniques used must complement and enhance the nature of that which is interpreted. There are many factors to consider when choosing the mix of interpretive techniques, which are more fully explored in *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual*.

Interpretive Centers

There are many benefits of an interpretive center which concentrates themes and objectives in one place. In some cases, an interpretive center allows for the perfect combination of interpretive techniques to tell the story of the destination or attraction. An interpretive center may be combined with a museum or visitor information center, and distribute maps, guides and brochures for local accommodation and restaurants. It can house commercial ventures, retail space for tour operators, or a café. It can also serve as the starting point for a visit to a destination. Many destinations and attractions do not have the financial resources to develop an interpretive center. However, by looking beyond municipal and other public offices, a broad array of funding sources may be found. All the following techniques can be used in an interpretive center.

Festivals and Performances

Festivals and performances, with proper promotion, can be incentives for travelers to visit a destination. They present an opportunity for travelers to experience local culture and get a sense of the destination. Popular festivals around the world currently focus on food, music, clothing and dancing, all of which demonstrate different parts of a destinations' culture(s), and allow locals and travelers to gather to celebrate and enjoy the event. Tourism has, in some cases, inspired a revitalization of artistic traditions, because it produces demand and economic support for the arts.

Interactive Displays

Interactive displays are very effective in engaging visitors - children and adults alike. Giving visitors an opportunity to try their hand at a traditional instrument, board game, cooking skill or artistic technique often leaves them with a strong impression and connection to the place that they have visited. Interactive experiences can happen in a variety of areas and are relatively straightforward to implement.

Audio-Visual Media

The use of sound and images is a dramatic way to tell a story. Audio-visual presentations are seen as entertainment and have the ability to capture visitors' attention more effectively than reading. A film or slide show can serve as an

introduction to a site or provide most of the interpretive display. It can be copied and distributed to tourists or education centers as a way of attracting more visitors to the site.

Computer-Based Interpretation

The main advantage of computer applications is that they offer a wide range of materials to the audience. Their large storage capacity allows users to access detailed interpretations if they are interested in a deeper analysis of a destination's story.

Interpretive Interactive Kiosks in the Community

An interactive kiosk is a **computer terminal** with specialized hardware and software that provides access to information and applications for communication, commerce, entertainment and education. Kiosks are used in many travel related areas, such as airports, hotels and even retail environments. They allow access to information, check-in and other interactive applications such as maps and video.

Virtual and Augmented Reality

While there are very few examples of virtual or augmented reality currently being used in interpretation in tourism situations, interpretation planners must begin to think about how they can provide insights and introductions to their sites. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are portals to other places and times (real or imagined), assisted by visual technologies. Any reality can be created and experienced. VR and AR provide different experiences, but what is key for a site or attraction is their ability to re-create, for example, a ruined temple or an entire village, that allows visitors to experience the past reality of the site or attraction.

Mobile-Based Applications

Traveler behavior shows that mobile devices are increasingly being put at the center of activities, whether it is to access information, communicate or share experiences on social media; people use their mobile devices almost constantly. A smartphone can be a vital tool in the overall interpretation plan of a destination or attraction, as the visitor, in almost all cases, already has the device and knows how to use it. Given this reality, the task is to develop applications or websites for information, interactions or even VR or AR experiences, to be facilitated through mobile devices. A mobile-based application can provide in-depth information, maps, audio tours, and much more. There are many examples of these technologies being used in places such as Britain and the United States, some of which are discussed in *The Tourism Interpretation Planning and Management Manual*.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to make the case for the incorporation of interpretation into the larger destination planning process. Incorporating interpretation into the overall process requires a mindset change on the part of destination planners to recognize that storytelling, the development of themes and use of a range of media is an essential part of the visitor's experience.

Putting into place interpretive strategies requires a partnership approach, where a range of stakeholders are responsible for the development of interpretive initiatives with the destination planner playing a strong coordinating role to ensure that interpretive strategies are not only incorporated but the necessary regulatory and infrastructure needs are established. This task is a complex one given that key players will be concerned with meeting numerous educational, preservation, financial, learning, behavioral and emotional objectives.

Within this partnership approach, the development of detailed themes and stories should be entrusted to specialists, who could be interpretive designers or content specialists such as historians, naturalists or ethnologists, from the private sector, academia or governmental organizations. This is important since interpretation can be considered both as an interdisciplinary science and an art. It requires communication skills and approaches, a knowledge of marketing in order to better understand the visitor, an ability to communicate the attributes of a destination or attraction to audiences, business management and financial acumen, and a sound grasp of both tourism planning and media design principles.

The secret of successful interpretation is capturing the essence of a site, history, event, culture or resource. If there are a number of really interesting aspects of a destination or attraction, it is necessary to link them in a way that is memorable for the visitor. To focus efforts and avoid visitor overload, it is useful to organize information into selected storylines. These are the main messages that the visitors will hopefully carry away with them. Storylines are crucial to interpretation as they give visitors clear threads to follow, rather than a series of disconnected facts. Some key aspects of a good storyline are going beyond mere description, to a level of detail appropriate for the audience, and linking tangible items to intangible ideas.

Although defining the significant themes and stories of a destination can be seen as the domain of specialists, residents must be incorporated into the overall storytelling process. This may require some capacity building, in

order to make the residents the authentic heart of the story presentation of a destination or attraction. In some instances, special staff and volunteers can be engaged, with training in a range of interpretive concerns, and communication and language being essential.

Financial constraints and access to the necessary resources present significant challenges in many places in Southeast Asia. Public-private partnerships, as with many other areas of planning and development, are seen as essential instruments in achieving the goals of the many stakeholders in a destination. Increasingly the private sector has to adopt an important role in developing experiences working collaboratively with the private sector as well as nonprofits given the fact that for many private sector concerns their business model very much depends either directly or indirectly on high quality destinations and attractions. For example, suppliers such as IT companies can assist in the development of software and, where appropriate, provide hardware. This will often form part of their CSR activities, and having their support recognized by various stakeholders can provide them with invaluable short and medium term benefits.

Very often those directly responsible for the planning and delivery of programs have little or no training, access to technical assistance or experience. Typically, managers and those responsible for developing interpretive programs should have experience in researching stories and themes, planning, the nature and effectiveness of various interpretive techniques and how to manage processes always with the understanding the specialist will carry out the detailed planning and design.

With modern technologies, interpretation can take new forms, in keeping with the ways travelers digest information. The ability of stories to extend far beyond the constraints of the destination's interpretative center allows for an extended traveler journey, that can start at home, continue at the destination and even when they return home.

Specialists in interpretation, working closely with destination planners and managers, can provide destinations or attractions with advantages while meeting responsible tourism objectives, telling authentic stories that involve all key stakeholders, especially local communities. Achieving this requires people to work together effectively and develop approaches that can be realistically incorporated into the destination and attraction management process.

The authors recognize the challenge of convincing traditional destination management professionals and public sector tourism officials to incorporate yet another dimension into their decision-making and implementation. However, very often those involved in the marketing and promotion of destinations and attractions will begin to appreciate that their primary responsibility is interpretation using different methods and approaches.

With an increasing customer emphasis on authenticity and unique experiences, hotels, retail operations and a range of service businesses need to effectively identify and communicate what makes their offerings unique. Interpretation offers the processes and techniques to accomplish their goals and provide a competitive advantage.

Incorporating interpretation into the destination and attraction development process requires a willingness on the part of stakeholders to work together. The challenge comes ever more significant in the development of the regional tourism and marketing strategies that the authors are presently exploring.

References

- Biesiada, J. (2016, October 5). Word-of-mouth marketing inspires more travelers than social media. *Travel Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Travel-Agent-Issues/Word-of-mouth-marketing-inspires-more-travelers-than-social-media>
- Fitzsimmons, A. (2017, January 11). 7 luxury travel trends for 2017. *National Geographic*. Retrieved for <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/top-10/seven-luxury-travel-trends-hotel/>
- Gale, T. (2004). *Defining tomorrow's tourism product: packaging experiences*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280385974_Defining_tomorrow's_tourism_product_packaging_experiences
- Gross, M., & Zimmerman, R. (2002). *Interpretive centers: The history, design and development of nature and visitor centers*. Stevens Point, WI: University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.
- Interpret Europe. (2016). *Engaging your visitors: guidelines for achieving excellence in heritage interpretation*. Witzhausen: Interpret Europe.

- Jamieson, W. (1988). *A Manual for Main Street Interpretation with the heritage interpretation group*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary.
- Jamieson, W. (2001). *Community tourism destination management: Principles and practices*. Bangkok, Thailand: Saengsawang World Press.
- Jamieson, W. (Eds.). (2006). *Destination management in developing economies*. New York, NY: The Haworth Hospitality Press
- Kim, J.J., & Fesenmaier, D. (2015). *Designing tourism places: Understanding the tourism experience through our senses*. Tourism Travel and Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/ttra2015/Academic_Papers_Oral/19 ?
- Lane, L. (2017, January 15). 1 Top-10 List of 017 Travel Trends and Destinations. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lealane/2017/01/15/a-top-10-list-of-2017-travel-trends-and-destinations/#39877a351bb6>
- Ludwig, T. (2015). *The interpretive guide: Sharing heritage with people* (2nd ed.). Werleshausen: Bildungswerk Interpretation.
- Moscardo, G. (2003). Interpretation and sustainable tourism: Functions, examples and principles. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14(1). Retrieved from https://www.jcu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/122874/jcudev_012862.pdf
- Tilkin, G. (Eds.). (n.d). Professional development in heritage interpretation: Manual. *InHerit*. Retrieved from <https://issuu.com/aldbieseneu/docs/manual-inherit-en>
- Tilden, F. (1957). *Interpreting our heritage*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Veverka, J.A. (1998). *Interpretive master planning*. Tustin, California: Acorn Naturalists.
- World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). (2012). *The comparative economic impact of travel & tourism*. Retrieved from https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/benchmark%20reports/the_comparative_economic_impact_of_travel__tourism.pdf