HerTour4Youth

2020-1-UK01-KA227-YOU-094543

IO1- A3: Digital Design Compendium
Module: Hybrid skills in Heritage Tourism Management

KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Partnerships for creativity

ΑΤΕΡΜΟΝ

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REVISION HISTORY

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REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

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1	2020-1-UK01-KA227-YOU-094543		HerTour4Youth Proposal
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ID	Reference		Title
1	Deliverable IO1.A2		Elaboration of Training Methodology
2			

APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

Contents

1.   Introduction

In this module we will discuss hybrid skills and how these can apply to heritage tourism. Hybrid skills are a broad term, so we will try to narrow it down by looking at how some traditional soft skills can be "hybridized" - meaning how they can be adjusted and combined with new skills and technologies.

1.1   Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, you will be able to:
- LO1: Familiarize yourself with what hybrid skills are and how the combine traditional soft skills and modern digital skills
- LO2: Become acquainted with the relevant digital technologies that you will use hybrid skills in
- LO3: Acquire a better understanding of how to apply these hybrid skills in practice

1.2   Key words

Hybrid skills, soft skills, digitization, communication skills, cultural awareness,

1.3   Estimated seat time

1 hour

1.4   Glossary of terms

- **Digital Currency:** A fiat currency with a predetermined amount that can be exchanged for services. Usually these currencies are decentralized, meaning they do not come from a bank or country.
- **Digital environments:** A real environment with digital augmentations, or a virtual environment created entirely artificially.
- **Hybrid skills:** Skills that combine *soft* skills and *technical* skills. In this digital era, hybrid skills are needed to enable people to add value beyond the application of technology, (Munthe, 2021)
- **Suspension of disbelief:** The process of making someone believe that what they are seeing is real, despite it not being so.
- **Coding:** The knowledge and ability to write programming code – the language on which all computer programs and applications are written on.

2.   Title of the Module

In this module we are going to examine some of the most important soft skills in the heritage tourism sector, and add a technical dimension to them, turning traditional soft skills into hybrid skills.

1. Customer service skills

Customer skills are most important in the hotel and services business, however, they are still essential in the heritage tourism sector. Being able to provide a pleasant, informative and safe environment for tourists requires abilities centred around understanding, problem-solving and maintaining a well-rounded knowledge base of the heritage site. In addition, costumer service includes the processing of payments and other forms of monetary transactions.

Hybridization of Costumer Service Skills: There are two main areas of focus here, the knowledge base of a professional in the sector and their digital skills. Specifically, we'll start off by looking at the knowledge base. As heritage sites become more and more digitized, it will be important for new professionals to familiarize themselves with the most relative technologies and facilities of the site. For example, a heritage site including Augmented Reality exhibitions will require you to be very familiar with the way it works; not just in terms of the technology, but in terms of how it can be easily used and accessed by all the visitors. So, in reality, you are looking to become a person who can render digital services more comprehensive, familiar and accessible to your visitors.
The other side of the coin is digital skills related to costumer services. Being able to assist visitors who are not physically present, process payment methods, such as blockchain transactions, and be able to guide people through virtual environments will be essential in the future.

So let's look at these digital skills in more depth:

Virtual Assistance: Being able to use online communications platforms is already an essential skills, but this goes deeper than simply having the knowledge to do so in technical terms. We will look at this in a lot more detail in the "Communication" section further down.

Blockchain and Digital Transactions: As digital currencies become more and more wide-spread, payments using them will also become more wide-spread. The first thing you will need to do is familiarise yourself with the different common currencies. (Narayanan *et al.* 2016)

The most widely used digital currencies used right not are:

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Bitcoin: a very popular, but increasingly obsolete. Bitcoin popularized digital currencies, and it was originally designed to serve as a digital payment method. Due to its volatile price and high production cost however, it is now regarded more as an asset than a currency. Still, it is currently the most widely used digital currency.

Ethereum: the second most widely used digital currency in the market. Ethereum can be used for digital payments, but it is mostly used as a framework upon which to build other digital currencies or applications. In general, Ethereum is considered a lot more functional than Bitcoin, and although you are unlikely to see many Ethereum payments being processed, it is important to be familiar with the currency, as the heritage site, or the company that you collaborate with might have its own application or currency based on Ethereum.

XRP: the fastest and most efficient transaction currency. While XRP allows for other functions, like Ethereum does, it is primarily a method of payment, which makes it very relevant in the field of tourism. XRP is currently on the verge of becoming the main method of transaction for multiple banks and institutions, awaiting a court decision in the US to move forward with those, as its price is too volatile before the decision is made.

Tether: the most stable digital currency. Tether was made to specifically mirror the price fluctuations of the dollar. This means that its actual value is the most stable of all digital currencies. Tether right now stands the most chance of becoming a viable method of payment, as there are no fluctuations and costs attached with its use. Effectively, if you have 5 dollars, you can get 5 coins of Tether in theory. This makes Tether a very user friendly coin, which doesn't even require conversions.

When discussing digital transactions, you need to familiarize yourself with two important concepts:

Digital Wallet: It's essentially a lot like a bank account, in which all transactions are processed. When a visitor pays with digital currencies, these end up in your digital wallet. Setting up a digital wallet is not difficult, it only requires some basic documentation. However, it is important to remember that digital transactions are focused around anonymity. This means that, as things are right not, you will need to come up with ways to confirm a payment, such as the client providing you with digital receipt of the transaction.

Speed of transaction: Every digital currency has a drastically different speed at which a transaction is processed. Because these are combined with other factors, such as cost of transaction, every company will choose a different currency to process its payments. You will need to be familiar with the speed of the transaction, as it will be important for maintaining customer satisfaction (e.g. reducing waiting

times and expediting a transaction).

Digital Environments:

As we've discussed in previous chapters, Virtual and Augmented Reality are fast becoming a staple in heritage tourism. New professionals in the field will have to focus on transferring their communication and customer service skills to the digital world (Agosti *et al.* 2014).. Let's look at a few examples of that:

Digital Tours: Entire heritage sites are already available in digital worlds. With developing 3D, visitors will be able to walk around these sites and even receive guided tours. Training to move around in a 3D environment is essential, as is interacting with the assets around the site.

Suspension of Disbelief: When participating in a virtual reality or augmented reality, you will have to learn how to maintain the suspension of disbelief. It's essential that you act as if both the virtual or the augmented assets are real. It's almost like acting to a degree. For augmented and virtual realities to be viable, the visitors of the digital heritage sites will have to feel as if they are being part of a real experience.

2. Communication skills

Exceptional communication skills are highly valued in most industries and the higher up one gets in the hierarchy, the more important they become. In the hospitality and tourism business, each day can involve contacts with people of a variety of backgrounds, ages, nationalities and temperaments.

Communication skills include both verbal and non-verbal communication (such as body language). When discussing communication skills and technical skills, it gives rise to hybrid communication skills. Let's take a look at what that means exactly:

Digital Communication Skills: In Heritage tourism you may often need to communicate with visitors or other stakeholders through online platforms. COVID-19 has greatly popularized these platforms, but it has also exposed a lack of skills on the part of many professionals.
Here's a list of things to keep in mind whenever communicating through an online platform (Hammond & Moseley, 2018):

1. Maintain eye-contact with the camera, this way the viewer can maintain eye-contact with your digital projection. This is often a point that's missed by most people. The source of the image is the lens of the camera, so treat it as your viewer's eyes.
2. Maintain a neutral or specific background across all communications. It maintains professionalism and gives the impression that communication is handled with professionalism and seriousness, even if you are working from home.
3. Keep your torso, elbows, and full face on the screen, that way you can simulate a proper office image. Depending on the setting, you can also appear on screen standing (for example if you are giving a vitual tour), but it's important to always consider how you will appear onscreen.
4. Maintain a steady and comprehensive speech. When our voice goes through digitization it can become more difficult to understand. Considering the people you communicate may also be speaking different languages, it's important to ensure the can understand what you are saying.

Virtual and Augmented Reality Interactions: As mentioned above, you may be required to perform tours in Virtual or Augmented Reality environments. We discussed what the suspension of disbelief is previously, but not we'll look at how you can maintain it:

1. Treat real and virtual assets the same. Whether presenting something entirely virtual or something that has been digitally augmented, it's important to make the viewers and attendees feel like they are immersed in the experience. An example would be if a heritage site is digitally augmented by adding people from an ancient time walking around and interacting with visitors. In this case you need to treat these virtual people as a normal and natural part of the exhibition, if not as real people.

2. Actively include the virtual or augmented assets in any presentations or tours. This is especially important for augmented reality. The purpose of augmented reality is to enhance an environment and experience. To do that you must treat it in the same light as you would treat a natural asset. On top of maintaining the suspension of disbelief, it will also gradually make people accept the digital assets as an integral part of the experience and not just flavouring.

3. Maintain your verbal and non-verbal skills in a simulated environment. If you are performing tour or any similar interaction in a virtual world, spend time practicing body movements and presentation methods (assuming you have the ability to move in this environment).

3. Language skills

Language skills are a particular plus in the hospitality field as they increase one's value as an employee. Speaking clients' language enables one to establish a more intimate relationship with them which promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a classical skill, language can be hybridized by adding another version of it in your arsenal – coding.

Coding is itself a language, with rules, exceptions and most importantly, the inclusion of communication. Throughout your training we will discuss AI, but AI is only as good as the people who make and teach them. Developing coding skills is a first step to understanding how AI works. However, when discussing hybrid language skills, we will also discuss how to understand AI even without coding skills.

Coding Skills and language

Combining language and coding skills will make you particularly valuable in virtual and augmented reality settings, as you can provide input on how create these environments for people with different languages. What's more you will be able to provide input on artificial intelligence usage in everyday settings, such as receptionists and chatbots. (Mitchell, 2019)

Artificial Intelligence and chatbots: Teaching artificial intelligence how to speak and behave is rising field, which is still being developed daily. AI is only capable of imitating behaviour it has learned from humans, and different languages include very different cultural and behavioural aspects that will need to be included. So, when designing an AI or when teaching it how to communicate, it will need to learn the speech patterns and cultural habits of every language separately – it can't simply translate an existing language into another. The ability to code will provide you with the understanding on how to properly "train" artificial intelligence, giving you access to an entirely new field of work.

Even without coding knowledge, you can assist if you know other languages, especially if you have the appropriate cultural skills (discussed further below).

4. Cultural awareness
Hospitality and tourism enterprises are more likely than most to deal with customers of a variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. The ability to be culturally aware and get past one's own cultural norms is crucial to building a successful career in this sector.
Typically, customers will not always share the same values, belief systems and perceptions, so it's important to break free from cultural barriers. Cultural awareness is an essential social skill that will help customers feel comfortable and at home with their surroundings. The goal is to satisfy their needs and wants, so as to turn them into repeat customers.

Transferring these skills into a digital setting can be quite challenging, but it is essential when discussing virtual/augmented reality and Artificial Intelligence.

Virtual/Augmented Realities: In physical heritage sites, the implication is that visitors will be passive observers of the site. They will be able to explore it, but the overall heritage site does not change depending on the visitor. This changes with virtual and augmented realities. Not only can you restore and improve certain aspects of the site, but you can actively augment it with appropriate assets, which can allow a visitor to learn more about the era that the site was built, or the people that used to live around it. But the key word here is "appropriate".

When adding assets to a heritage site, you need to be wary of the culture of people visiting them. For examples, adding half-naked augmented reality people to an ancient heritage site to simulate what it would look like in antiquity might be inappropriate for certain people, for example.
Having representations of historic battles occurring in a digital environment might also be inappropriate, especially if people from the countries that fought are present. History is different for different people, one country's heroes are another country's villains, but instead of an obstacle, this can be an opportunity. Social issues also become important in such cases, and some historic subjects and behaviours may be harmful to some people.

Tailored experiences for different cultures: The opportunity that presents itself here is the creation of customized experiences for different cultures. Instead of providing a uniform tour or presentation of a heritage site, you can add and remove assets (augmented or virtual) based on the people watching. You can potentially add aspects that are more close to their own culture (such as how their country interacted with he heritage site), or avoid sensitive subjects (such as a depiction of how their country partially destroyed the heritage site for example). That's not to

3.   Assessment

3.1   Knowledge assessment

Quiz-like assessment based on the main content. Please mark the correct answer with bold when required. Include 10 questions for your module. Increase gradually the level of difficulty.

Question 1(multiple choice or true/false): All digital currencies are similar in terms of their speed and cost of transaction
[True] [False]

Question 2 (multiple choice or true/false): For digital currencies, it's essential to be able to verify a transaction through:
[A receipt of payment provided by the customer] [Having the customer do it in front of an employee] [A notification detailing the identity of the customer on the digital wallet]

Question 3 (multiple choice or true/false): During a virtual tour, you should:
[treat virtual assets the same way you would treat real ones] [include virtual assets but ensure the audience knows they are not real] [ignore virtual assets]

Question 4 (multiple answers correct): Digital Environment Tours refers to:
[Tours through physical sites with Augmented Reality] [Tours through entirely Virtual Reality sites] [Tours through digital galleries] [Tours with audio assistance]

Question 5 (multiple answers correct): Depending on the setting, when participating in an online communication session you should:
[have your torso, elbows and full face appear on the screen] [have a close-up of your face on the screen] [prefer to have the logo of your company/site on the screen instead of yourself] [appear fully on screen, as in your whole body]

Question 6 (multiple answers correct): Artificial Intelligence is currently:
[capable of learning on its own without human input] [capable of translating language and verbal inputs directly to other languages] [dependent on human

training and input] [unable to process lnguistic and cultural differences without input]

Question 7 (multiple answers correct): When designing a virtual or augmented tour: [It should be uniform for all people] [certain people should be excluded to allow for more controversial subjects to be included] [specific subjects should be avoided for specific groups, based on the cultural identity of the visitors] [visitors should have the option to receive tailored experiences based on their cultural identity]

Question 8 (matching): Match the terms with their definitions.

Hybrid skills: Such skills refer to the combination of *soft* skills and *technical* skills. For regarding a skills as hybrid depends on various factors comprising the actual job, the organization, the industry, etc (MyComputerCareer, 2021).
Digital Currency: A fiat currency with a predetermined amount that can be exchanged for services. Usually these currencies are decentralized, meaning they do not come from a bank or country.
Digital environments: A real environment with digital augmentations, or a virtual environment created entirely artificially.
Suspension of disbelief: The process of making someone believe that what they are seeing is real, despite it not being so.
Coding: The knowledge and ability to write programming code – the language on which all computer programs and applications are written on.

Question 9 (matching): Match the concepts with their explanations.
AI Communicaton Skills: Teaching artificial intelligence how to speak and behave is not the same in every language. AI is only capable of imitating behaviour it has learned from humans, and different languages include very different cultural and behavioural aspects that will need to be included.
Digital Tours: With developing 3D, visitors will be able to walk around these sites and even receive guided tours. Training to move around in a 3D environment is essential, as is interacting with the assets around the site.
Cultural Awareness: Visitors will not always share the same values, belief systems and perceptions, so it's important to break free from cultural barriers.
Communication skills: include both verbal and non-verbal communication (such as body language). When discussing communication skills and technical skills, it gives rise to hybrid communication skills. Let's take a look at what that means exactly
Tailored Augmentations: Instead of providing a uniform tour or presentation of a heritage site, you can add and remove assets (augmented or virtual) based on the people watching.

Question 10 (matching): Match the problems with their solutions.
Anonymity of Digital Currencies: Pre-agreed receipt form such as a unique identification code

People being apprehensive of digital assets: Using suspension of disbelief to immerse the visitors into the experience, real and digital alike.
People from different cultures may have vastly differing opinions and preferences: Available tailor-made experiences based on user preference.
You may have to perform a tour or presentation entirely online: Ensure that your overall presentation and image is professional and interesting to the viewer through the use of eye=contact, appropriate body language and screen ratios.
Artificial Intelligence can't directly translate from one language to another efficiently: Ensure that the artificial intelligence bot is properly adjusted to each language that it speaks, individually.

3.2 Skills assessment

Now it's time to put these hybrid skills to the test. For this exercise, we'll focus on utilising appropriate communication skills for an online tour. You've been tasked with the following:

You will have to perform an online tour for remote viewers, who will observe you on their screens. You will perform this tour in front of a green screen which will be projecting a real 3D view of the heritage site. The camera will be moving further inside the heritage site, and you will have to give a tour as it does, just like you would if you were really there.

List five things that you will prepare prior to the recording, primarily focused around communication and the identify of your viewers.

4.   References

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