Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings

Volume 2017   Article 2

2017

Holding on to Analogue Times: The Resistance towards Digital Implicitness

Malin Zillinger
Lund University, malin.zillinger@ism.lu.se

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings

Part of the Tourism and Travel Commons

Title: Holding on to Analogue Times: The Resistance towards Digital Implicitness
Author: Malin Zillinger
Affiliation: Lund University
Contact: malin.zillinger@ism.lu.se
Session Type: Presentation

Abstract:

Digital services, wifi, web 2.0 and destination applications are just a few examples of technical devices and requirements that seem to have turned the tourism industry upside down within only a few years. It seems as if everyone—marketers, tourists, destination developers, and others—climbs on the bandwagon to cheer newly accomplished technical innovations found within tourism. To name a few examples, this is about Trip Advisor, AirBnB, guiding applications, and portable maps—but there would be more to mention, and there are more to come. Speaking to tourism actors as well as researchers, digital worlds are the way to go if one wants to attract more tourists. And the number might not be the most important thing; we aim at pleased visitors who spread the word on their social media networks and who plan to come back.

But what if not all tourists feel attracted by this one and only way to push development? What about those individuals who resist being engrossed by personally adapted applications to their latest smart phone? And may we even speak of a resisting tourism culture that abandons the idea that these are just a few individuals? We have met this species on the Swedish countryside, and we did not even plan to. This discovery is part of a research project on the dissemination of tourist information, and aims to find out more about German tourists searching for information before and during their journey to Sweden. The first round of data collection took place in summer 2016, in two rural municipalities, both related to fictional figures well known outside of the Swedish borders: the gloomy detective Wallander from Ystad and the brave Pippi Longstocking, together with her ever so brave creator Astrid Lindgren from Vimmerby. Both destinations attract a considerable number of German tourists.

Interviewing more than 90 individuals in these two places, we quickly found out that we were dealing with a group of tourists who actively rejected fast, technical fashion and subsisted perfectly well without the otherwise so prevalent technical devices and medias. Their most important source of information is the haptic guidebook, in close unification with maps and road signs. The visitors repeatedly told us that what influenced their choice of place and attraction the most were well visible signs, comfortable camping sites, and not least, the upcoming weather, which made them travel in different geographic directions to escape the rain. Questions on their activity on social media were visibly taken offence at: "***I do not use Facebook***!" We think that we are here sleuthing a community that might seem extraordinary in today's tourism paradigm, but that we have touched upon an important and maybe not so unusual attitude towards today's all-embracing digital worlds. The aim of this presentation is therefore to throw light on this counter / parallel / alternative development cord and to debate upon whether this anti-digital community is as unusual as it seems.