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I-SPEED

Political Steering Group meeting in Powys

One of the main objective of the I-SPEED project is to increase the awareness of policy makers regarding ICT potentials for growth, competitiveness, and sustainability of European Tourism Economy.

For this purpose within the framework of the project Political Steering Group (PSG) composed by politicians, has been set up. Politicians and decision makers from partner cities and regions are monitoring the process of project implementation and are the guarantors for making the best use of the I-SPEED results.

All politicians met for the first time while attending the kick off meeting that took place in Venice, in February 2010, and 12 months after this event they will meet again in Powys, not only to discuss and evaluate first year of project realization but also to take part in political debate on indentified good practices (see the article entitled Second I-SPEED work shop "Identification of good practices") and to set the I-SPEED goals for the year 2011.

Karolina Iwinska, Warsaw



➤ Powys Castle

Focus on Powys

The first I-SPEED Political Steering Group will be hosted by Powys County Council during February 2011. Powys' Board Member for Regeneration and Development, Councillor Wynne Jones said: "The I-SPEED project is important in identifying policies that can increase the competitiveness of the tourism economy and foster growth through the use of ICT. We look forward to hosting the

first Political Steering Group in Powys, where the elected representatives from each partner will scrutinise I-SPEED's findings to date and set the future direction of the project."The county of Powys is located in the centre of Wales, approximately 1 hour north of the Welsh capital, Cardiff and 1 ½ hours from the English cities of Birmingham and Liverpool. It is home to several world famous festivals and events including the Hay Festival



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Norwegian Funds

of Literature and the Arts, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Show, the Brecon Jazz Festival and the wacky World Bog Snorkelling Championship. The area has spectacular landscapes, including the Brecon Beacons National Park, Forest Fawr Geopark and Dyfi Biosphere (UNESCO designation). It attracts a wide range of visitors looking to experience the great outdoors and the county's extensive heritage. Typical activities include walking, kayaking, mountain biking and visiting historic sights, such as Powis Castle.

Councillor Wynne Jones said: "Powys County Council plays an active role in marketing the area to visitors, branding the area 'Mid Wales'. We use ICT



➤ Brecon Jazz Festival in Powys

extensively by enabling visitors to build their own brochure on www.exploremid-wales.com, download walking guides

Tourism: keeping Europe the world's top destination

On June 30th The European Commission has adopted the Communication "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new framework for tourism in Europe". The Communication suggests a new policy framework for the future of the European tourism and some initiatives at European level to be implemented in close cooperation with representatives of the public and private tourism sector. The new European Commission will mainly concentrate around four pillars

Improving the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Europe

Promoting the continuous sustainable development of EU tourism

Enhancing Europe's image as home to sustainable and high quality destinations

Maximising the potential of EU policies and financial instruments for the development of European tourism



World airline route map (source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/World-airline-routemap-2009.png>)

Particularly interesting for I-SPEED project is the proposal of a joint "ICT tourism platform" among major tourism stakeholders (travel agencies, hotels, etc). Moreover in the short term the Commission will develop a pilot project aiming at creating a network including all national and regional research institutes as well as national tourist offices. While a virtual European Tourism Observatory could provide, in the medium term, a network for coordination of tourism research at European level as well as for enhanced further analysis of tourism realities and trends and act as a repository of EU-wide information about new developments in the tourism industry. In the new framework context, the Commission will be supported by the initiative implemented in cooperation with the Network of European Regions for a sustainable and competitive European tourism (NECSTouR) and the EDEN destinations networks. The Communication can be downloaded here: www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/communications/communication2010_en.pdf

Giuseppe Mella, Venice

from www.leapingstiles.co.uk or keep up with latest visitor news via Facebook and Twitter." Powys is the largest county in Wales by land area, with the population of 132,000 mainly concentrated in small towns and villages. Population density is 25 people per km² and the largest towns are Newtown (12,783), Ystradgynlais (9,004) and Brecon (7,901). The administrative county of Powys was formed in 1974 from the historic counties of Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire. It is named after the British Kingdom of Powys, which occupied the northern two thirds of the current county during the 5th-12th centuries. The area has a rich and varied history of upheaval and rebellion. From struggles between the Princes' of Powys and Owain Glyndor's battles against English rule in the 14th Century. In 1282 the area witnessed a battle that led to the death of Llywelyn the Last, the final ruler of an independent Wales.

Powys has the highest levels of self employment in Wales and the private sector is dominated by micro businesses. In 2009 the unemployment rate was approx 5.1% and 26,000 residents speak the Welsh language. The economies largest sector is public administration and health, however tourism has overtaken agriculture becoming the second largest employer. In 2008 there were 4.7 million visitors to Powys of which 3.4 million were day visitors and 2.1m bed-nights were spent.

In 2008 the total bed-spaces were 8760 and income from tourism totalled £647.2m.

For more information see:

Explore Mid Wales: www.exploremidwales.com

Powys County Council: www.powys.gov.uk

Twitter: twitter.com/exploremidwales

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Explore-Mid-Wales-Brecon-Beacons/117320561627910

Gavin Stephens, Powys

Second I-SPEED work shop “Identification of good practices”

The second work shop where carried out in Heraklion, Crete 21-22 September. The theme of the work shop was “Identification of Good practices” and all present partner regions presented their identified good practices, focusing on the lessons learned and success factors. Additionally a working group that had the mission to identify good practices on EU level presented their findings.

Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, from Bournemouth University and Ms Mariate Linza from Vicomtech were invited to talk about latest trends in ICT and its use in public sector and tourism.

The work shop ended by a discussion about which strategies needed to be addressed in our regions in order to meet the latest trends that professor Buhalis (see related article) and Ms Linza described during their speeches.



➤ I-SPEED team in Heraklion

Eva Lundin, Hedmark

Focus on Crete



Crete is a tourist destination, well known mostly for its history, its monuments, the culture, the sea and the beaches. It maintains an important position in world tourism due to its comparative advantage and the established position in Europe. Crete is the largest and most populous

of the Greek islands and the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. It forms a significant part of the economy and cultural heritage of Greece, while it retains its own local cultural traits. Crete was the center of the Minoan civilization, the first advanced civilization in Europe.

With a population of 650,000 in year 2005, Crete is one of the 13 regions into which Greece is divided. The region of Crete is constituted by the prefectures of Heraklion, Lasithi, Rethimno and Chania and Heraklion is the Capital of homonym prefecture. Crete borders North by Cretan Sea and Southerly by the Lybian sea. It covers an area of 8,336 km² (3,219 sq mi), with a coastline of 1,046 km. Crete is extremely mountainous (six tops that exceed the 2.000 m), and its character is defined by a high mountain range crossing from west to east, formed by three different groups of mountains.

In the Region of Crete belong also enough small islands as Gaydos, Ntia, Koyfonisi, Gaidouronisi or Chrysh, Dionysades, Spinalonga and Paksimadi, from that most are uninhabited.

The economy of Crete, which was mainly based on farming, and fishing, began to change visibly during the 1970s. While an emphasis remains on farming and stock breeding, due to the climate and terrain of the island, there has been a drop in manufactur-

ing and an observable expansion in its service industries (mainly tourism-related). The island has a per capita income close to 100% of the Greek average. Crete is one of the most popular holiday destinations in Greece. Fifteen percent of all arrivals in Greece come through the city of Heraklion (port and airport),

while charter journeys to Heraklion last year made up 20% of all charter flights in Greece.

Overall, more than two million tourists visited Crete last year. Today, the island's tourism infrastructure caters to all tastes, including a very wide range of accommodation. The Region of

Crete has a comparative advantage regarding the interconnection of tourism and cultural economy with ICT, which is the existence of great infrastructures and education institutes

Emmanouella Gerogiannaki, Crete

The Future of Tourism

- Professor Dimitrios Buhalis asks "how do we innovate?"



➤ Prof Buhalis and Ms Linaza (Vicomtech)

At the 2nd I-SPEED workshop in Heraklion, Professor Dimitrios Buhalis delivered an energetic presentation outlining how we had come to the current model of e-Tourism and the future for tourism technology.

In 1995, customers who used the internet to research their flights had a greater knowledge of what they wanted and were much more efficient to serve. Fifteen years later, millions of flights are bought online every year but there are still significant amounts of people without internet access, known as the 'Digital Divide'.

Maps of communications traffic show internet and mobile use is mainly focused in North America and Europe, with some uptake in parts of Asia.

Web 2.0 has also meant that industry interface with customers is no longer just one way. Through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, the indus-

try can engage in new ways and listen to their customers. With a high level of user generated content, managing a brand online has also changed. Consumers now have the ability to take a picture and upload it instantly, which has many implications for an industry that could previously carefully control their brochure images.

Prof Buhalis explained that the industry should no longer be fixated on a traditional view of customer identity but instead market to those interested in a specific product, be it culture, heritage, activities, the outdoors or food. The consumer is changing and the type of engagement that is required with consumers also needs to change.

Prof Buhalis believes that many new technological applications will soon become relevant for the tourism sector. Augmented reality, where the digital world is fully integrated with the real

world is a growing area of innovation that will contribute to new tourism business models.

As technologies and networks become more convergent and content becomes more connected with reality, there is also a potentially negative impact of technology. However, putting the visitor into the heart of the experience is now essential, either in marketing the destination, or enhancing the experience when consumers are on holiday. Forecasting of the impact of these consumer led trends is often difficult. As Prof Buhalis says, 'I am very good at predicting the future but I am not very good at predicting when it is going to happen'.

Notes:

Prof Buhalis is Head of the E-Tourism Unit in Bournemouth University and also President of IFITT – Institute for IT & Tourism (www.ifitt.org). The organisation is about to hold its 18th Conference, ENTER 2011 (see www.enter2011.org).

Useful links:

Rather than describe the information here, for best impact the links below should be watched.

While discussing 'how do we now communicate with customers?' Prof Buhalis gave the example of www.tourismemontreal.org and played the video from the website.

The video puts the customer straight into the experience, playing with their feelings and emotions.

Sixth Sense project undertaken by a MIT PHD student called Pranav Mistry. The video and information can be found here:

www.pranavmistry.com/projects/sixth-sense

Gavin Stephens, Powys

From July 1st the Urban Community of Nantes is an I-SPEED project partner

Nantes is a French Atlantic port city on the estuary of the river Loire with 600,000-inhabitants. The city's economy and demographics stem from both traditional sectors (naval and aeronautic construction and services) and innovative sectors (ICTs, biotechnology, composites, and creative and cultural industries). Since 1 January 2001, Nantes Métropole has been acting

in the service of 600,000 inhabitants of 24 municipalities representing a territory of 52,336 hectares in the Nantes urban area. Twenty-four municipalities which, in creating Nantes Métropole, joined forces for greater solidarity between their residents and for development that would respect natural balances. Its areas of responsibility are many : travel and transport, economic development, employment, international development, higher education and research, tourism, roads, cleaning, waste, water, sanitation, environment, energy, housing, planning and urban



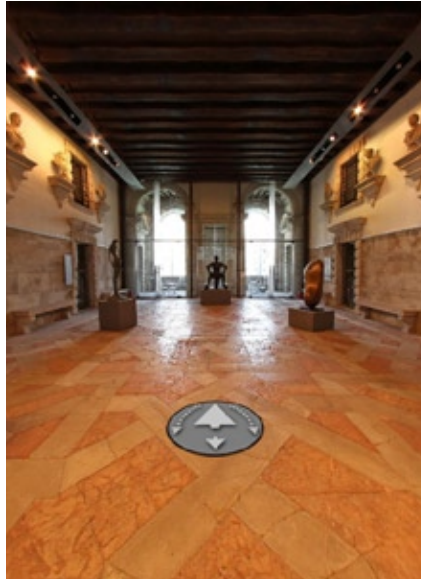
➤ Actual I-SPEED partnership

development. The urban community is governed by an assembly of 113 elected officials appointed by the municipal councils of the 24 individual towns in the area. The President of Nantes Métropole is Jean-Marc Ayraut, MP and Mayor of Nantes.

www.nantesmetropole.fr

Giuseppe Mella, Venice

Venice Museums, a 360° virtual tour on //venice>connected



Looking at a Tintoretto, Tiepolo or a Veronese in such a place as Doge's Palace in Venice is something unique. Now, just logging on to //venice>connected, the official web site for tourism run by the Venice City Council, and using the new feature by Geomondo, a young up-and-coming company, you can enjoy a visit from the comfort of your home, peering closely at the great works of art inside the Doge's Palace.

From September 23rd, on maps.veniceconnected.it, and also on the Fondazione Musei web site, you could zoom, rotate, pan through and explore every inch of the extraordinary Paradiso by Tintoretto (1588 - 1594) inside the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, for example, and every work included in five from the eleven Venice museums: beside Doge's Palace, also Ca' Rezzonico, Ca' Pesaro, the Museum of Natural History and the Clock Tower.

Shortly, there will be Museo Correr, Museo Fortuny, Carlo Goldoni's House, Museo di Palazzo Mocenigo, Glass Museum and Lace Museum.

Just twirling around 360 degrees to see what is in more than 5000 high quality images - with 5000 x 2500 pixel resolution -, you are able to discover the masterpieces included in the exhibit collections of these five museums, by great artists of all time, from Bellini, Tiziano, Tintoretto, Longhi, Canova, Tiepolo, to Klimt, Chagall, Kandisky and Klee,

and over two millions pieces included in the scientific collection of Museum of Natural History.

Street Level is the technology used for Venice museums indoor map views featured in maps.veniceconnected.it. This interactive tool displays immersive, panoramic (360 degree) imagery of street-level scenes, as if you were looking at them with your own very eyes. The work behind the online indoor mapping of Venice museums has been done with painstaking care.

All the individual photos that have been collected by the cameras go through computer processing to make them ready for showing online: they are sewn together to create a 360° panorama, and then it is applied face blurring technology, which helps make sure that passers-by in the photographs can't be identified.

Every shot has been taken from a very short distance, about one meter, in order to frame with extreme precision pictures, frescos, decorations, statues and all other exhibit objects displayed. It is not the same as being there, it is true, though the virtual visit is thought just in preparation for the real one:

it develops the appetites of the visitors and inspire them, virtually reproducing the suggested exhibit path. That's the way it is for Doge's Palace, where you are invited to take a themed trail from Museo dell'Opera to the Secret Itineraries.

It is a very impressive experience visiting the loft, in correspondence of the magnificent Sala del Maggior Consiglio. Each museum is divided into different floors, for every of which you can visualize its plan including its points of interest: it is really child's play viewing and navigating the environments.

Discovering and enjoying the treasures displayed in Venice museums has never been so easy, although, obviously, the sublime pleasure of being in Venice could never change or diminish.

Enjoy an online virtual tour of Venice and its museums:

www.maps.veniceconnected.it

Francesca Perotto, Venice

Other info

➤ I-SPEED case has been selected for publication on the ePractice.eu portal, as the project is considered of particular interest to the eGovernment community. The I-SPEED case page is: <http://www.epractice.eu/en/cases/ispeed>
Designed as a Web 2.0 community service, the ePractice.eu portal is tailored to the needs of eGovernment, eInclusion and eHealth practitioners. ePractice members may exchange experiences and views, publish cases concerning their own projects and share news, events, publications, best practices and lessons learnt. Knowledge and expertise repositories can be found in the ePractice Library and News sections. Communication is built around ePractice Communities, where peers can meet either physically via workshops or virtually via blogs. Members are regularly kept up-to-date by the ePractice Newsletter subscription service, the eGovernment Fact-sheets for 34 European countries and the Events section. In addition, ePractice TV offers interviews and presentations on eGovernment, eInclusion and eHealth.

Events announcements

- **VIII^o Euromeeting - Europe: Sustainable and Competitive Tourism. December 9-10, 2010 - Florence, Italy**
The VIII Edition is focused on Tourism and European Identity; Sustainable Tourism and Research & Innovation; Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in the field of Tourism
www.necstour.eu
- **Future Internet week. December 13-17, 2010 - Ghent, Belgium**
The Future Internet week is the result of cooperation between many ICT players. The week offers a unique program of consecutive conferences, meetings and workshops related to the future internet. 2500 participants from all over Europe are expected to attend the different meetings and will ensure the synergy and cross-fertilization that is needed to reach a comprehensive approach to the digital society and economy. As organizations such as the Future Internet Assembly, ServiceWave, the Future Internet Research & Experimentation community, the European Network of Living Labs and many join forces, they will ensure a comprehensive approach to the digital economy and society.
www.fi-week.eu
- **e-Travel Forum 2011. January 25-26, 2011 - Warsaw, Poland**
The annual, international conference dedicated to the issues of online sales of travel products
www.e-travelforum.pl/en
- **ENTER 2011 – The 18th International Conference on IT and Travel & Tourism. January 26-28, 2011 – Innsbruck, Austria**
www.enter2011.org

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