
Digital storytelling as a tool to promote tourism development in the digital information economy: a concept paper based on social media

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Abstract

Nowadays, influences of digital storytelling (DST) in social media to promote tourism and hospitality industry has shown much interest in industries and academia. However, many research have been conducted in the customer's perspective, but not from the service provider's perception. Therefore, it has reflected that actions have been taken by service providers to measure influences of digital storytelling in social media to promote tourism and hospitality are limited. So, by analyzing contents in digital storytelling of service providers that the current research investigates how tourism industries can decide digital storytelling to promote their products and services. It has strongly shown that service providers in tourism and hospitality have not merely considered sell the products when using digital storytelling to market services, rather consider customer satisfaction, engagement, and brand awareness as the primary Return on Investment (ROI).

Keywords: Tourism, Hospitality, Digital Storytelling, Tourism Development

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1. Introduction

Passive marketing and promoting mechanisms in the tourism sector have investigated new horizons of online social media platforms to promote services. Customers and consumers are becoming novelty in mobile services and engage fully with digital contents that freely can release in the Internet. Participation and engagement of customers and consumers are resulting in create user generate content to valve new marketing dimensions. Therefore, the last decade that using of digital storytelling in the service industries of the economies has increased significantly.

However, storytelling is not a new concept in promoting of services in the history. It has showed in journey of tourism development and promotion since the early days of civilization, that storytelling plays a vital role to distribute knowledge among cultures and nations. That has led to keep heritage knowledge from one generation to another in world cultures. Similarly, the ways of storytelling are expanding its patterns, styles and the formats much. In particularly, the present digital information economy with robust technology, the storytelling has changed from oral patterns to digital patterns. However, in general, storytelling uses to create and distribute knowledge and share understanding among people across different cultures. So, technological advancement has accelerated the way of marketing of products and services in the digital technologies. This is putting a new pressure on service marketers to introduce an array of technological tools instead of traditional storytelling in the industries. However, it is very important nowadays to investigate the ways in which the use of digital technology to enhance services for the well-being of the economies. On that purpose, new way of storytelling comes with a new term as (Page and Thomas, 2011; Lambert, 2013; Niemi et al., 2014; Niemi and Multisilta, 2015) highlight as digital storytelling. Further, (McGee, 2015) emphasizes new buzz term facilitates to connect technologies, digital mobile devices and language to produce meaningful stories.

So, many industries in tourism and hospitality sector are mostly depending on customers who consume their knowledge contents. However, it has well-reflected recently that many tourists have cut down their expenses due to financial recessions. But, it has seen as the new buzz of overwhelming appearance of digital storytelling in the tourism and hospitality industries that again rising of customer attention towards to tourism engagements. But, one of the significant facts that service providers in tourism and hospitality industry are facing critical issues that not knowing the positive influences in DST to market their products and services in profitable way. Therefore, one of the most challenging aspects in digital information economy as (Sterne, 2010; Anderson, 2012) critic that the business value is merely holding by knowledge savvy customers and consumers. But, it seems that many service providers are not taken initiative to measure how digital storytelling may influence to bring satisfaction for customers and consumers, enhance the quality in services and products,

sustainable development in tourism and hospitality, and finally economic stability.

Therefore, principal study of digital storytelling in tourism industry has led to set new trends to illustrate the potential of spreading knowledge and information in a contemporary fashion. It has indicated that better to understand by service providers the important of engaging in virtual communities with service brands in digitally. As a result, the rapid growth of digital storytelling has led to a huge customer base to target the masses. It facilitates service providers to develop a personal level relationship with consumers and it reduces unwanted workload of service providers. It seems that customers start consuming of digital contents and share themselves the desired information/knowledge to the potential consumers.

But, the critical and significant issue is that to ensure service providers in industries of tourism and hospitality to deliver maximum values from the products and services through digital storytelling to the potential clients. Therefore, it is very important that, however to identify behavior of consuming patterns of digital contents by customers and consumers in digital information economy.

2. Objective of the Research

Research has investigated that the use of digital storytelling to promote tourism and hospitality from service industry's perspective with content analyze research method. So, the study has undertaken to carry out the following objectives:

- a. to use digital storytelling as a new method to promote tourism and hospitality; and
- b. to identify importance of digital contents of products and services in industries.

3. Research Problem

Digital storytelling in social media is a strong marketing and promotion platform many industries. But, in the tourism and hospitality industries are not taken into consideration its potentials yet. Therefore, the industry needs to understand clients, their potentials and behavior on consuming of digital contents of the stories. Therefore, the research problem of the study is to insight the important of digital storytelling to promote tourism and hospitality services and how to develop digital contents to cater digital knowledge savvy consumers in the digital information economy

4. Literature Review

The term, tourism and hospitality, is very ambiguous. Therefore, understanding of the real mean of tourism and hospitality better to see its characteristics first. So, an intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, perishability and lack of ownership are very important in

tourism. Because of that United Nations World Trade Organization has defined it as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. And, simultaneously, it has emphasized that tourism is an unusual product, in that it exists only as information at the point of sale and cannot be sampled before the purchase of decision is made.

It has reflected that customers are involved in an on-going process of searching information to create an image or mental prototype representing the travel experience. If the desired information is not found or is a laborious process, then the customer might lose interest. At the same time, if the desired information is accessible but customer is unaware of it, even then it is a loss of potential purchaser.

However, tourism has emerged as a major economic sector and source of social and cultural change since the 1950s. It has become an important source of wealth for many economies and as (Robinson, Lück and Smith, 2013) mention that a high priority for many economies. As a result, development and promotion of tourism and hospitality should be a collaborative process. And all stakeholders of the industry must contribute positively. Therefore, as (Holloway and Taylor, 2006) illustrate to promote tourism and hospitality stakeholders such as private sector support services, public sector support services and produces in the industry must link with the digital information economy.

However, nowadays one of the significant questions is how to market the desired products and services in tourism sector to the knowledge savvy consumers. Also, what kind of knowledge contents desire to consume by them in what medium and form. Therefore, the growing trend of digital storytelling in social media is setting a new direction to promote and market products and services in the tourism and hospitality industries. So, social media contributes in many ways to create, collate, analyze, distribute and share digital stories with desired clients.

The term of social media is buzz word and can be seen in many contexts in various viewpoints. So, social media evolves to create digital contents as user-generate contents and consumer-generate media. Therefore, digital contents in social media as (Gilmore, 1998) explains welcome to experience economy. Therefore, as (Abrahamson, 1998) demonstrates that storytelling would be a foundation of the service promotion. Digital storytelling keeps a room to the service provider to define what kind of digital storytelling may create. It further allows them to build a very innovative and creative digital story. Doing so, clients can engage with the contents while sharing of them with other customers who like to consume same kind of products and services. As a result, with the aid of digital media, a service provider has opportunities to develop clients' focused and service-oriented stories in digitally. Further, as (McDrury and Alterio, 2003) introduce five stages model for storytelling that easily can use

for tourism promotion. It can identify that all the stakeholders may have to play vital roles to get benefits from the concept. So, to deliver, good digital story: finding attractive storytelling it to desire to engage with the content, expanding and processing it for wider clients, and re-constructing of the story have to take place with positive and proactive linkage with a storyteller and a story consumer.

However, digital storytelling seems to be not a new concept or new ideology in tourism and hospitality industries, but it has introduced with a new form of pedagogical endeavor as (Alexandra and Levine, 2008) explain digital storytelling buzzes in tourism industries because of proliferation of digital technologies especially Web 2.0. Therefore, what the traditional storyteller uses to present the knowledge contents of the story, in the digital storyteller uses many technical tools to present the knowledge contents. As a result, it would be realistic that digital storytelling is to see in practical vibrant in digital form. It can very clearly identify that digital storytelling may significantly contribute to modify the traditional forms of storytelling into robust advancement with ongoing scenario of digital environment. With this point of view, it can strengthen a strong consumer satisfaction and customer expectation and it shapes to use multimedia communication tools to change the storytelling into a modern form. Therefore, that modern form of digital storytelling can be an instructional, persuasive, historical, and reflective action.

Therefore, as (Woodhouse, 2008; Sadik, 2008; Lambert, 2013; and McGee, 2015) explain the concept of digital storytelling is very important in service industries because it has potentials to increase engagement, collaboration, encouragement and active participation. The digital storytelling is very ambiguous but influences to promote products and services in industries are massive. This scenario especially can be seen in gathering, harvesting and consuming of digital stories in tourism and hospitality.

The evidence of digital storytelling in service industries have been reflected positively because it helps both content creator and the consumer to perform well than the traditional ways of marketing them. Also, it allows them to use interactive media to engage with virtual audience and to perform very interactively. So, to accomplish the marketing task of products and services that marketer requires skills of the digital storytelling with subject knowledge and to use interactive media to transform that knowledge to the clients. Novice clients may gain more potentials while consuming the digital contents in a new way of telling the storytelling by service providers. It gives a client to positive involvement in communication, collaboration and teamwork efforts with peer marketers to share gain own knowledge and to show know-how with each other. Simultaneously, the service provider must use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to convey a coherent digital content which direct to engagements. Then the digital storytelling makes service promotion pleasant and coherent rather a complex marketing environment.

5. Research Findings

The results have reflected that digital storytelling in social media is one of the key areas to be introduced to the tourism industries in the digital information economy. It is very important now to address functional, social and psychological needs of clients in the tourism and hospitality industries due to the savvy digital base knowledge/information contents. Also, with the buzzing competition among service developments and promotion industries.

It has significantly identified that digital storytelling has unique potential to assist clients in the tourism and hospitality industries to gain and acquire new cultural as well as historical and geographical knowledge and information. Because, service providers must create and share value added digital knowledge contents instead of selling services and products. So, research has found that digital storytelling in service industries are more beneficial to motivate and improve service quality with collaborative efforts.

Also, the findings indicate that setting up digital storytelling activities involve different approaches to promote and develop that frame the whole endeavor and the industries' practices. So, activities in digital storytelling should take place in informal settings, in natural surroundings and online, and aim to deliver good knowledge contents to promote products and services. Industries' practices employ customer and consumer or peer-to-peer collaborative work as scaffolding devices to mediate the process of tourism development. Therefore, collaborative work can be easily happened in digital storytelling in two ways that an individually or peer basis.

Most of the time this study has seen that organization that know-how digital information economy's influences on the service industries link with digital knowledge contents without any hazel and use digital storytelling as an effective marketing strategy. However, both service providers and service promoters that new to sophisticated IT and digital technology may face huge challenges. So, because of unique results in digital storytelling that can be used as a blended mechanism to promote and develop tourism and hospitality purely as a new marketing strategy.

Also, the research findings have shown that lack of knowledge and skills to use new technology and its tools can be solved easily by out sourcing of expertise in the fields. But, this new concept is going to use promote tourism that initially better to concern; the motivation for use digital storytelling in tourism promotion and development, the tasks and roles that assign for digital storytelling to comprehend, the important tasks of the digital content writer and creator, the end task of the customer and consumer, and finally the support and collaboration can gain from the sophisticated technology.

Given the scenario has shown that promotion of tourism is a continue task. So, introduction of digital storytelling as a new strategy to enhance marketing of products and

services in the sector may have to think critically. There is no argument that digital contents may bridging the gap efficiently and effectively in tourism promotion and development drive but protection of cultural values and heritage in the digital contents are also equally important. Because, the traditional storytelling in tourism promotion has been protected their values certainly.

So, digital storytelling shows that what extend service provider can motivate the client. And, how technology can assist the service provider to promote tourism and hospitality without skills and knowledge in marketing and advertising. Also, it indicates that what way digital storytelling should have create stipulation to help clients to gain access to digital knowledge content. Therefore, the service providers' as well as the clients' roles have to define in-advance because it has to support in developing and using of digital storytelling to ensure to promote tourism. It has significantly reflected in the research that knowledge and skills in digital storytelling is not usually enough to support service promoter is getting the best from digital information economy. Therefore, continuous professional development and support to evaluate the impact on digital storytelling is likely to be required. The end task of the service provider and the client must be identified and recognize. It has noticed that digital technologies are usually more successful as a motivation supplement rather than as a replacement for usual tourism promotion mechanisms. It is therefore important carefully identify what it will replace or how the digital knowledge contents will be additional value added to the clients than normal experience they have received. And finally, critically must think what support and collaboration can gain from using digital storytelling to fulfill tourism promotion and development successfully.

6. Conclusion

Digital storytelling is one of the significant new approaches to promote and develop service industries in the economies. It is a valuable concept to create digital contents using ICTs with multimedia support. However, the multimedia support that should not consider a separate element of the service promotion. Doing so the digital storytelling can be used to discover potentials as n service promotion tool for service industries to build and share new digital knowledge contents with clients while facing the huge competition at the digital information economies in tourism and hospitality promotion and development industries

7. Reference

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