Virtual Reality - The Future for Tourism? Taylor’s Professor Takes a Trip “Back to the Future”

Having published his first paper on virtual reality back in 1994, Professor Hobson was asked to revisit his projections on the adoption of technologies in tourism over the last twenty-five years, and to assess what is likely to come next.

“I have to admit” said Professor Perry Hobson, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement at Taylor’s University “that virtual reality (VR) has not taken off as fast as was expected twenty-five years ago. But then again, other technologies have moved ahead much faster - such as the web, mobile phones and artificial intelligence. New technologies, their development and adoption, all move at different speeds......and the time for much more immersive VR experiences may now soon be coming”. Prof Perry Hobson published his original journal article on “Virtual Reality: A new horizon for the tourism industry” back in 1994, and this year he was invited to revisit this topic at the annual 2018 Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) conference in the UK. Hosted by Bournemouth University, he spoke alongside two other invited speakers - Professor Nigel Hemmington, the Pro Vice-Chancellor International for Auckland University of Technology (NZ) and Professor Jay Kandampully from Ohio State University (USA). He pointed out during his presentation that, “VR has recently become the fastest growing segment of the entertainment and media industry. The Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2018-22 published by PWC has predicted 8million VR headsets will be sold by then. We are now seeing airlines such as Emirates starting to invest in VR, as well as theme park operators who are integrating VR experiences into rollercoaster rides. Of course, its complicated technology. But given the growth of immersive gaming we are now just a few steps away from seeing a huge leap forward in much
more immersive VR experiences. The implications for tourism are potentially significant from not only a pre-experience marketing point of view but also as a substitution. Furthermore, there is also the opportunity to create complete fantasy destinations too and they may be even more appealing”. The 2018 CHME conference Chair, Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, reflected that, this year “we welcomed some 230 delegates from 48 countries, with 20 invited global speakers from a range of countries including the UK, USA, China, New Zealand, Malaysia and Switzerland” adding that, “the 5-day event created a range of initiatives that will help us to co-create global hospitality management for the future”. Prof Perry Hobson was made an Honorary Fellow of CHME in 2017 for his contribution to hospitality education and research – (Global Matters 2018)

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes” - Taylor’s Student Reflects on Her Exchange Experience to MMU in the UK

A semester overseas is often a transformational experience – with new places to see, new people to meet and new things to study. An European Union Erasmus+ grant helped this student to do just that.

Alyssa Auh Min Si with friends at MMU in the UK

Alyssa Auh Min Si recalls that she once heard a famous quote by Marcel Proust who said that “the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes”. When she first heard this, she wasn’t exactly sure what it meant – but having now been on a semester exchange to Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in the UK as an EU funded Erasmus+ student, she now understands. “I remember that it was a sunny afternoon that a group of us left KL for Manchester” she said. However, they all quickly discovered that the weather in the UK can be quite different to Malaysia. “On arriving, I still remember that my friends and I quickly took our jackets and scarfs to wrap around us as we were not used to the weather!” They were met by volunteers from the MMU International Office, and she recalls “although we were tired from our long flight it was so nice to see someone with a positive attitude that early in the morning”. Initially they all stayed for a week in a hostel, “Once we got into the rooms, we quickly made some new friends from all around the world. My roommates were from Italy, Hong Kong, America and Denmark. They were all so friendly, and it was nice to immediately be able to make friends from all around the world….. Although I only get to stay in that hostel for one week, but I was so grateful to make new friends from around the world straight away”. MMU helped the students to find their own accommodation for the semester. “It was not easy to find
accommodation as lot of owners only offer their home for at least 6-months and we were only there for about 4-months”. It took about a week to find the right, but as she said, “it was a great experience for me, as this was something I had to do on my own”. Alyssa is studying for a Bachelor in International Hospitality Management at Taylor’s University. At MMU she selected four modules which included Managing Hospitality People and Service. She recalls that, “I found this subject particularly interesting as there were guest speakers coming in and speak about their working experiences in the hotel industry. I also had the opportunity to go on a field trip with the whole class to the Worsley Park Marriott Hotel & Country Club”. Not only did she get to explore the city of Manchester, she also went to see other nearby cities such as Salford, Liverpool and Birmingham. As she said, “each city in England is quite different and has their unique feeling and culture”. She also did some overseas travelling to some other European countries such as Spain and Portugal. “These countries were breath-taking in terms of their culture. I went to the city of Barcelona, Madrid and Seville in Spain. These places are amazing in their own ways - particularly as they are so full of life and activities during the evening. It was a great experience travelling around as I gained more knowledge about the culture of each country that I visited”. To see Alyssa’s video click here – (Global Matters 2018)

Taylor’s University Professor Gives “An Editor’s Perspective” at a Research Seminar at MUST in Macau

While publishing research is an increasing focus of universities, many postgraduate students and early career staff do not have much experience or insights into how journals operate or the pitfalls to avoid when submitting their research for publication.

In his role as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Vacation Marketing (JVM), Professor Perry Hobson, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement was invited to give a seminar on “How to Start Publishing” to PhD students and early career researchers at Macau University of Science at Technology (MUST) in Taipa, Macau (SAR-China). The content of the seminar was largely drawn from his own background as a research academic, and was coupled with his nearly 20-years of experience as the Editor-in-Chief of JVM. First, he discussed on how researchers need to focus their research for publication. Second, he focused on how to develop and write up research for a
Third, he addressed the various issues relating how to the double-blind review process. As he said, “Scholarship and research are an important part of an academic’s life. But the journey from having a research idea to publishing that research can be a tricky one”. During the seminar, he also addressed some of the challenges facing academic researchers today. He noted that, “there is an increased pressure to publish” and that there is now an increasing expectation that you will do that in indexed or top ranked and high-impact journals”. He also cautioned the researchers and PhD students “to be aware of the problematic practices of fake and predatory journals” which often target them. After the seminar, Ms Kat Luo who is one of the PhD students at MUST, said “Thank you for your excellent and impressive speech”. Prof Hobson has been Editor-In-Chief of JVM since 1999. JVM is listed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), which is the international interdisciplinary citation index produced by the Thomson Reuters’ Healthcare & Science division, and is listed by them as a Top 100 journal in the General Business category. It is also recognised as an ‘A’ journal by the Australian Business Deans Council. He has previously given similar workshops at Far Eastern University (FEU) and Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) in The Philippines and also at I-SHOU University (ISU) in Taiwan - (Global Matters 2018)