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Fakultät für Tourismus der Hochschule München
www.tourismus.hm.edu | ISSN 1866-3044 | 2,80€





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Impressum:

Herausgeber: Prof. Dr. Felix Kolbeck, Fakultät für Tourismus, Hochschule München, Schachenmeierstraße 35, 80636 München **Internet:** www.tourismus.hm.edu **Vi.S.d.P.:** Prof. Dr. Felix Kolbeck **Redaktion:** Kerstin Mesch **ISSN:** 1866-3044 **Verlag:** vmm wirtschaftsverlag gmbh & co. kg, Kleine Grottenau 1, 86150 Augsburg, www.vmm-wirtschaftsverlag.de **Media- und Objektleitung:** Hans Peter Engel, Telefon: 0821 4405-420, hanspeter.engel@vmm-wirtschaftsverlag.de **Titelbild:** Bahnhof 2000 Uelzen e.V., O. Huchthausen **Bilder:** Hochschule München **Bilder Regionalspecial:** Tourismusverband Tannheimer Tal **Grafik:** Birgit Hradetzky, Anne Gierlich **Bildbearbeitung:** Adnan Badnjevic **Lektorat:** Kerstin Jäger **Druck:** AZ Druck und Datentechnik GmbH, Kempten **Anzeigen:** Derzeit ist die Anzeigenpreisliste 2020 gültig. Der Inhalt dieses Heftes wurde sorgfältig erarbeitet. Für die Inhalte sind ausschließlich die Autoren verantwortlich. Herausgeber, Redaktion und Verlag übernehmen für die Richtigkeit der Angaben sowie für eventuelle Druckfehler keine Haftung. Alle in PASSPORT abgedruckten Beiträge sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Nachdruck oder anderweitige Verwendung sind nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung des Herausgebers gestattet.

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Designing desires

Use of experience technologies in destination development



Fig.1: Rafting experiences at Jochen Schweizer.

Jochen Schweizer

Markus Pillmayer

Christian Mikunda, Experience Economy expert¹:

People are crazy about emotions because they show them who they are and why it is worth living on earth.

“First, there was the food wave, then the consume wave and then the house. And now I am asking myself: What else can I do with myself?”² This admittedly quite provocative sounding quote from the futurologist and until 2007 academic director of the “Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen” (Foundation for Future Studies, Germany) puts the dilemma in a nutshell: The leisure and tourism industry attracts millions of leisure

and experience consumers who, from a material point of view, have everything they need, and yet still strive for more. Experience is to replace consume boredom. Distinctive slogans like “You are what you experience” by Jochen Schweizer, who wants to excite people with extraordinary experiences, are evidence of this (see Fig.1). It is no longer only about satisfying needs, but creating experiences is “in”, the post-modern human acts more and more experience oriented.

The tourist in the focus of the Experience Economy

In line with the concept of the Experience Economy by Pine and Gilmore³ unique, incomparable experiences are required that go beyond the mere

consumption of products and services. The consistently high quality of products and services, especially in industrialized nations, can no longer be used only for differentiation and the associated choice for or against a product. This new paradigm of unique and unforgettable experiences requires tourism service providers to invest more effort and develop clear added value for products and services that are already of consistent quality and highly functional. In this context, the focus lies on the intelligent combination of entertainment, education, escapism and aesthetics, which, ideally, appeal to all the travellers’ senses.

Against this background, Tussyadiah⁴ goes even one step fur-



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1 <http://www.mikunda.com/upload/73/download/expodata-interview-mikunda.pdf> [27.12.2019]
2 Opaschowski, 2013, p. 282

3 Pine/Gilmore, 2011, p. 3ff.

4 Tussyadiah, 2014

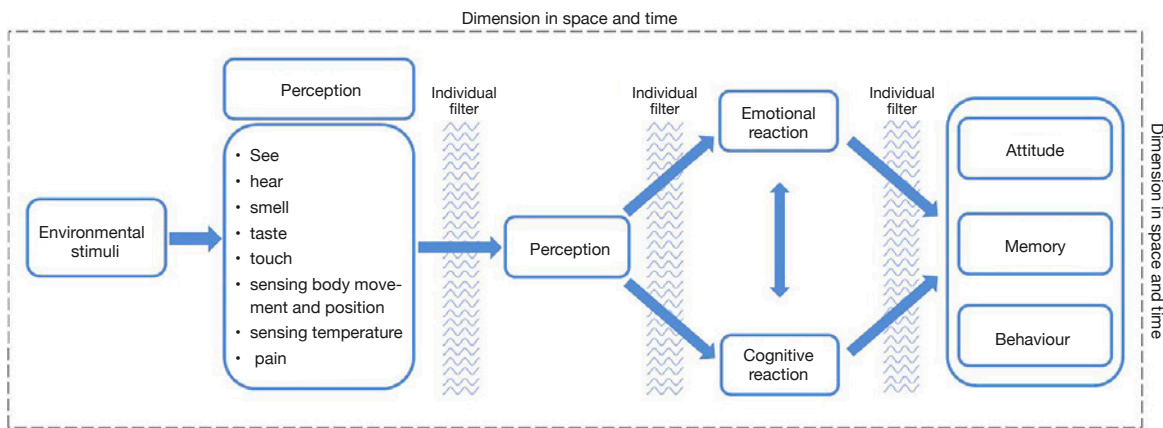


Fig.2: Design of touristic experiences

Own diagram following Fesenmaier and Xiang, 2017, p.6

ther in her thinking and names six central elements to produce experiences: themes, stories, atmospherics, affordances, co-creation and technology. As shown in Figure 3, each of these elements has a specific character, which in turn determines which emotions are received, interpreted and communicated to create unforgettable visitor experiences.

Thus, the clear link between environmental stimuli, perceptions and emotions – which ultimately lead to decision-making – and the specific nature of tourist experiences, which can vary greatly against this background, is one of the most important findings of experience research in recent decades.⁵ This is one of the central challenges for destination management organisations to sustainably address the senses of their guests, because the human senses serve to physiologically perceive the environment and thus the destination in which tourists stay or to which they want to go.

Understanding touristic experiences through senses

Our sensory organs let us see, hear, smell, taste and feel. Apart from that, humans also have a feeling for temperature, pain, balance and their body.⁶ According to Krishna⁷, the human senses are the central basis of how the human body collects information und uses it for understanding or developing meanings, attitudes,

behaviour and memories. This is shown in figure 2:

In the context of tourism, guests see, hear, smell, touch and taste while exploring a destination, in combination with their own thoughts and past experiences.⁸ The human body senses a specific meaning of the destination for itself and communicates positive, neutral or negative information. In this context, Pine and Gilmore urge to address all senses: “The sensory stimulants that accompany an experience should support and enhance its theme. The more senses an experience engages, the more effective and memorable it can be. Smart shoeshine operators augment the smell of polish with crisp snaps of the cloth, scents and sounds that don’t make the shoes any shinier but do make the experience more engaging. Savvy hair stylists’ shampoo and apply lotions not simply because the styling requires it but because they add more tactile sensations to the customer experience. Similarly, grocery stores pipe bakery smells into the aisles, and some use light and sound to simulate thunderstorms when misting their produce.”⁹

Since our emotional and cognitive reactions to destinations can also be explained by internalized experiences, understanding this process is key to shaping tourist experiences.¹⁰ The sensory experience of travellers, the differentiation of other cognitive processes and the measuring of different sensory modalities can pro-

vide an extensive database: This makes a decisive contribution to the staging of the experience, the associated product design and ultimately to competition differentiation. Product development and design in tourism, according to Wagner, Schobert and Steckenbauer¹¹, is strongly linked to the creation of unique experiences.

Contextualising travel as a complex phenomenon is the basis for aligning tourism product design with the individual expectations and needs of guests. In the process the strategic planning and the product design of destination managers meet the tourists’ expectations. In the sense of *conditio sine qua* emotional product design becomes a new form of destination marketing.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework for the design of touristic experiences.

Own diagram following Kim and Fesenmaier, 2015, p.2

¹¹ Wagner et al., 2019, p.10



⁵ Fesenmaier/Xiang, 2017, p. 6

⁶ Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF), 2006, p. 9 ff

⁷ Krishna, 2012, p. 344

⁸ Kim/Fesenmaier, 2015, p.1

⁹ Pine/Gilmore, 1998, p.104

¹⁰ Nguyen/Gyehee, 2018, p.23f.

Use of experience technology for experience measuring

Experience technologies are technologies that create new forms of participation and experiences for guests and travellers and generate a variety of data at those touch points¹² where guests and travellers come into contact with the tourism product or destination. This applies to tourist information centres, accommodation providers, mobility providers, leisure parks, thermal baths, events, festivals and many more. Experience technologies can range from mobile technologies like smartphones or tablets to portable technologies – so-called wearables – and fixed or physically digital installations. While experience technologies have been successfully used as survey instruments in trade research for years, they are still relatively new in tourism research.¹³

Examples of experience technologies are among others:

- Beacons¹⁴, smartwatches (compare Fig. 4), eye trackers, digital or inter-

12 = Touch point between tourist and tourism product
 13 Ensafi, 2019, p. 8, Scott et al., 2017, p. 1244
 14 = Transmitters of different sizes which use Bluetooth technology to send signals to a mobile device such as for example a smartphone. Thus relevant offers such as tour suggestions for families, if the guest is travelling with children, can be made during the customer journey. Beacons which are distributed throughout the destination locate the guest and trigger the sending of location-specific information about sights, etc.

active installations based on motion sensors,

- Bio sensors for measuring muscle tone, walking and running analysis, skin diagnostics, cell regulation screening¹⁵,
- Variations of various immersive display technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, holograms and sound experiences, all of which emphasise the atmosphere in a specific physical environment.

Experience technologies usually contain instructions to inform and entertain guests or to support the learning of certain facts. The use of these technologies ranges from pure service information to the design of artificial (digital) experience worlds.

Experience measurement as the basis for experience staging

The advantages of experience measurement using experience technologies are obvious – especially for tourism companies and destination management organisations. The knowledge gained enables them to understand what tourists perceive with their senses within a destination. Against this background, destination managers can modify or, if necessary, redesign tourism products depend-

15 Metabolism analysis

ing on their strategic orientation in order to make them attractive for guests. A better understanding of the effect of the senses on emotions enables destination managers to design more efficiently and, above all, more effectively – be it the interior of a hotel lobby, a tourist information centre, a hiking or cycling trail or a themed route, in order to tailor them to the individual needs of each traveller and thus make them unique and unforgettable. Experiences, associated emotions and the perceived destination image have an influence on guest satisfaction and guest behaviour.¹⁶ Nguyen and Gyehee point out that this leads to greater destination loyalty and a clearer destination image.¹⁷

A new (critical) way of looking at the Experience Economy?


The designing of meaningful experience concepts cannot take place without direct participation of the (potential) customer or guest. In general, therefore, a relative percentage of ideas and innovations will ultimately fail, as participation processes usually require time and money.¹⁸ Capital is destroyed because organisations invest too long in ideas and concepts that have either been developed only from within internal committees or follow the recommendation of rhetorically skilled tourism consultants. This can be avoided, as Storch and Pillmayer show, if the potential guest is directly involved from the beginning.¹⁹ A mere survey of guests and travellers does not offer sufficient reliability, as the intentions of the respondents may differ from their actual behaviour. Measurement of actual behaviour by means of experience technologies, which are available today thanks to technological innovations, should be considered in addition. If the results are not promising, time and investment can be used more effectively – an intended experience concept can thus be shelved at an early stage. If a concept is demonstrably attractive, and a fast and prof-

Fig. 4: Smartwatches belong to the so-called wearables and are becoming increasingly popular in everyday life and sports.

 New Africa/
stock.adobe.com



16 Prayag et al. 2017
 17 Nguyen/Gyehee, 2018, p. 31ff.
 18 Boswijk et al., 2007
 19 Storch/Pillmayer, 2018

itable rollout is a feasible option with the chosen design, competitive advantages can be generated in a globalized market with interchangeable products. To date, a manageable number of international research projects have dealt with the use of experience technologies in the tourism context.²⁰ Comments with regard to data protection, data storage and further use of sensitive data or possible misuse of data remain inadequate; an ethical dimension is also painfully lacking in the discussion. Representatives of the *scientific community* as well as of destinations would be well advised to think about this sufficiently and intensively in advance, despite all the advantages of measuring the experience using technology. 

20 Martins et al., 2017, Neuhofer et al., 2012, Tussyadiah/Park, 2018

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User Centred

Design thinking for good user experience

Michael Wörmann,
Ralph Berchtenbreiter

Let us begin this article on user experience with a brief observation in the field. We are sitting in the suburban train (S-Bahn) in Munich or, to put it more precisely, in a crowded S8 train on our way to the airport. We are looking forward to a short flight with Air Baltic to Riga. It suddenly occurs to us: Which terminal do we actually have to go to? Might it even be the new satellite terminal? That could be a close shave. Grab the mobile. It shouldn't take long to find out. This use case is one that probably concerns hundreds, if not thousands, of travellers every day in Munich. You would think that this information is easy to find. But it's not.

A web search takes us directly to the Munich Airport website. The first thing that greets us is a large cookie warning which, clicked away, reveals a list of all 76 airlines departing from Munich. We're in luck as Air Baltic be-

gins with the letter A and is therefore number 11 on the list, among all the other "Airs". Although fiddling around with our mobile is not that easy on the train – our luggage is always in somebody's way – we click on Air Baltic and find a lot of interesting information – that is, if you're a pilot. The airline's IATA code, the airline's ICAO code, a telephone number in Latvia and, right at the end, the terminal and the check-in area. But hang on a minute: Is terminal 1 the one the shuttle train goes to or not? How long do I need to get there from the S-Bahn train station?

This simple example illustrates that people and their needs are still apparently not the focal point when designing digital media for the travel and tourism industry. Admittedly, it is not an easy task to cater for the interests of such a wide range of user groups as regards information, communication and transactions on a website such as that of an airport. For this reason, in the past few years procedures and instruments have been



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developed allowing a user-centred development of digital media for an effective, efficient and satisfying user experience.

People-centred

The central concept here is User Experience, a term denoting every aspect of what a user experiences when interacting with a product. To optimize this is the goal behind all user-centred digital products design. In the past few years many of those responsible have developed a mind-set which centres on user experience and easy operation. The technical possibilities are intended to serve this purpose. A few key factors influence user experience and can be systematically optimized. In addition to the factors Utility, Accessibility, Usability and Aesthetics there is the Fulfilling the Brand Promise given for the product – a factor which can assume many different forms and which also depends very strongly on the expectations of the target group (see Fig.2).

Fig. 1: Developing person-centred digital media

[matamorworks/stock.adobe.com](https://matamorworks.com)



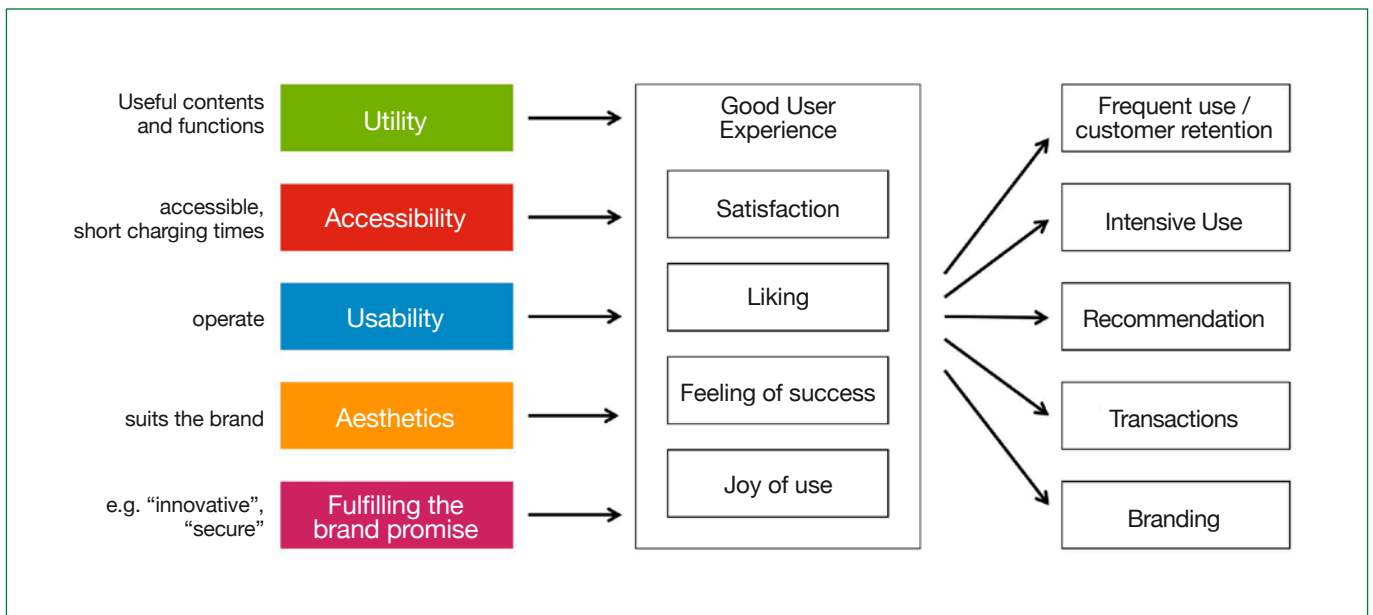


Fig.2 The Facit Digital User Experience Model¹.

For people-centred design, a few core principles have proven useful. Many teams today use the design thinking process which is based on, among other things, the following ideas.

- **The focus is on the person and their needs:** much importance is placed on understanding the target group, their problems and perceptions.
- **Interdisciplinary nature:** with team members coming from many different professional backgrounds, a more diverse range of perspectives and solution platforms is hoped for.
- **Iteration and agility:** solutions (such as for example digital products and their representation) are understood as hypotheses which require an examination with the target group. For demonstration purposes, simple prototypes which due to new insights, in particular user feedback, can be adapted, are used instead of a finished product.
- **Feedback loops with the target group:** at different points in time in the development process the target group has to be repeatedly involved in a suitable manner. To do so, a number of research methods are available.

The Design Thinking Process is often divided by practitioners into a different number of phases, with different names, which however are basically the same. At Facit Digital (see info

box) the following six phases are used (see Fig.3):

1. **Empathize:** Understanding the users' attitudes, behaviour and needs.
2. **Define:** Drawing conclusions from the analyses and defining requirements from the user and business perspective.
3. **Ideations:** Conceiving and prioritizing different solutions.
4. **Prototypes:** Creating concrete representations of the solutions.
5. **Tests:** Repeated tests and optimizing with the target group.
6. **Run:** Measuring success and fine-tuning after the launch.

Using different qualitative and quantitative methods of empirical social research, the persons, meaning the target group, can be involved again and again at any point along the process.

1 Emphasize

Ethnography and context analyses
Analysis of the contexts of use, the needs and pain points of potential users by observing and interviewing them in their usual environment. On this basis, ideas for solutions and new products as well as so-called personae can arise.

Diary studies

Selected representatives of the target group document their daily experiences with regard to a particular sub-

ject in an online diary. During this they are actively supported and interviewed. This for example allows a better understanding of how particular technologies can be used in the daily routine and what annoyance is caused – see our introductory example.

Closed online forums

Potential users discuss here in a closed online community specially set up for the purpose. In diaries, moderated forums, chats and questionnaires, requirements made of digital products and concept ideas are for example discussed for one to two weeks. This is a sensible method, in particular for target groups which are not easily reached. The special depth and scope of the contributions mean that this is often a good alternative to the classic focus groups.

Focus groups and in-depth interviews

In the test studio trained moderators explore the values, needs and requirements of representatives of the target group. Customers and creative people can be present at them live, behind a one-way mirror, and adapt the course of the exploration or supplement it with new questions.

Target group segmentation

Within the target group subgroups with similar needs and problems are identified so that they can be ad-

¹ see Sontheimer, 2016

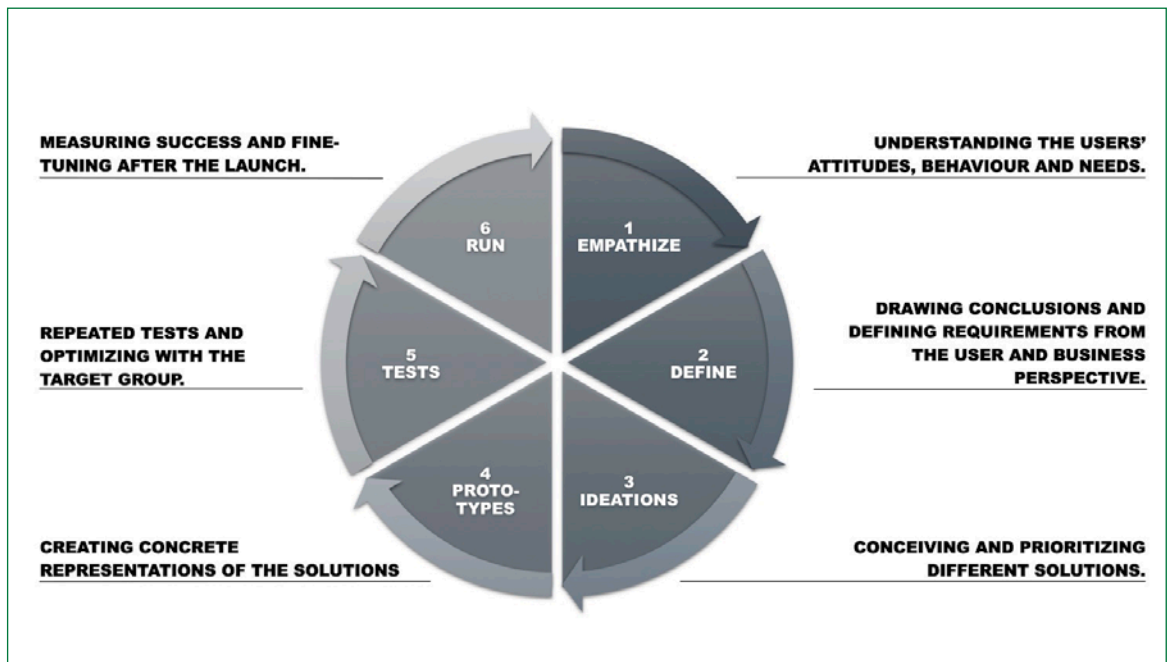


Fig.3: User-centred development phase chart

dressed with more suitable solutions. For this, large online surveys are as a rule used, in which attitudes, values, problems and wishes are polled as broadly as possible and then summarized via factor analyses. With the aid of cluster analyses, segments with similar needs structures are then identified. These segments form the basis for personae.

Customer journey analysis

This approach analyses and describes what contact points a persona uses when solving a scenario, and in what order. Through knowledge of the steps and the connections between different channels, a suggested interaction design can serve the mental model of a persona and identify breaks in the customer journey.

2 Define

Personae

Personae portray in a memorable way representatives of the user segments as points of orientation during ideation. In the process it is important to concentrate on those items of information which are significant for the design and to use only proven findings (e.g. from a segmentation study). Often irrelevant boilerplates and stereotype descriptions and catalogue pictures, which confuse more than they help, are used to describe personae.

Jobs to be done

Jobs to be done is a method used to present rational or emotional user needs in a uniform diagram.

Definition [of] user and business requirements

In this phase a decision matrix is created in which the requirements made of the product, from a user, business and technical perspective, are brought together.

3 Ideations

Co-creation and supergroups

are an intensive workshop format consisting of particularly introspective and eloquent participants from the target group who are particularly interested in the topic for discussion. A complicated procedure is used to select the participants. They prepare themselves intensively for the workshop through self-observation, for example with the aid of a diary. The needs, pain points and solution approaches are then developed together in the workshop. It is possible that in these workshops representatives of the target group work together with creative people from agencies and customers.

Feature and content prioritization: as a rule solution approaches result in technical features and content, which may cost a lot of money to implement. It therefore makes sense to

select those with the highest utility value for the target group. This utility value of content elements and functions can be quantified for particular target groups. A user-centred basis for decision-making for investments is thus created. Special statistical methods such as the Kano analysis, TURF or Max Diff are used for this, all of which work with quantitative data, for example from an online survey of the target group.

Card sorting

In the case of digital products, functions and contents have to be arranged in a suitable way and made accessible to the user. As soon as a certain number has been exceeded this is a pretty tricky task, which is where card sorting helps. At least one hundred representatives of the target group sort 50-70 content elements in an online tool according to their individual ideas. The data thus generated are clustered using cluster analyses. A sitemap developed through open card sorting provides the basis for good usability: effectiveness, efficiency and user friendliness are verifiably optimized, even before the interaction design begins.

4 Prototypes

Working with prototypes is one of the core ideas behind agile, user-centred development. Instead of complex, ab-

stract subtle concepts, product ideas and drafts for interaction designs are presented in more or less seemingly real, clickable prototypes. This makes it easier for project stakeholders to imagine the resulting product. They are moreover the basis for early feedback loops with potential users.

5 Test

Tree testing

An ideal site structure guides the users quickly and unerringly to the desired contents and functions. The tree test tests the effectiveness and efficiency of the navigation as well as the subjective satisfaction of the users, both for existing websites and for click dummies prior to the launch.

Expert review

Experience shows that over 50% of the usability problems of a website or app can be detected with the aid of an expert evaluation. Such a test can serve as preparation for a user experience test with actual users which can then be implemented at a higher level.

Design test

For the target group, an attractive graphic design is half the battle as regards user motivation and acceptance of a digital product. A design test with a quantitative random sample of potential users provides clear data on which draft design can best convey

the brand values and communication wishes and shows how the graphics can be optimized and fine-tuned.

Eye tracking

Only what is visible on a website can be perceived and used. Eye tracking is used during usability tests to track the users' fixations on the test material. This allows an analysis of the eye movements and directions of view on the pages of click dummies, websites and apps.

Usability test

In the usability test the usability and the user experience are tested using representatives of the target group in the laboratory. The participants carry out realistic use cases and are supervised and interviewed during the process. As a rule the tests are observed by all project stakeholders so that immediately afterwards measures on how to improve the prototypes can be decided on in an optimization workshop.

6 Run

User experience tracking

User-centred management of digital products does not end with the launch. User experience and user satisfaction change as they are influenced by the competitive environment, the user's own data management activities and changing user re-

quirements. UX tracking is a cockpit and early warning system for key performance indicators of the user experience and, by laying open the benefit of the optimization measures, helps with resource allocation.

Field user test

The field user test helps to test devices and UIs with the users under real conditions prior to the launch. This is a particularly good option for services with which many problems only become noticeable after long, habitual use.

Application

User-centred design shouldn't just be applied to websites and apps but should take in the entire digital and non-digital realm of customer contact points. It is for example important to optimize the ability to find relevant information in search engines and in each case offer suitable content to the users who have initiated the search. Our opening example clearly shows the need for this.

Also relevant are for example social media presences or voice user interfaces such as Alexa or Instant Messenger. The latter in particular have of late gained considerably in relevance in the tourism industry and will possibly become one of the most important communication and sales channels in the future. In China, this is al-

Fig.4: Customer communication via Facebook Messenger at KLM.

Source: Itimu, 2016

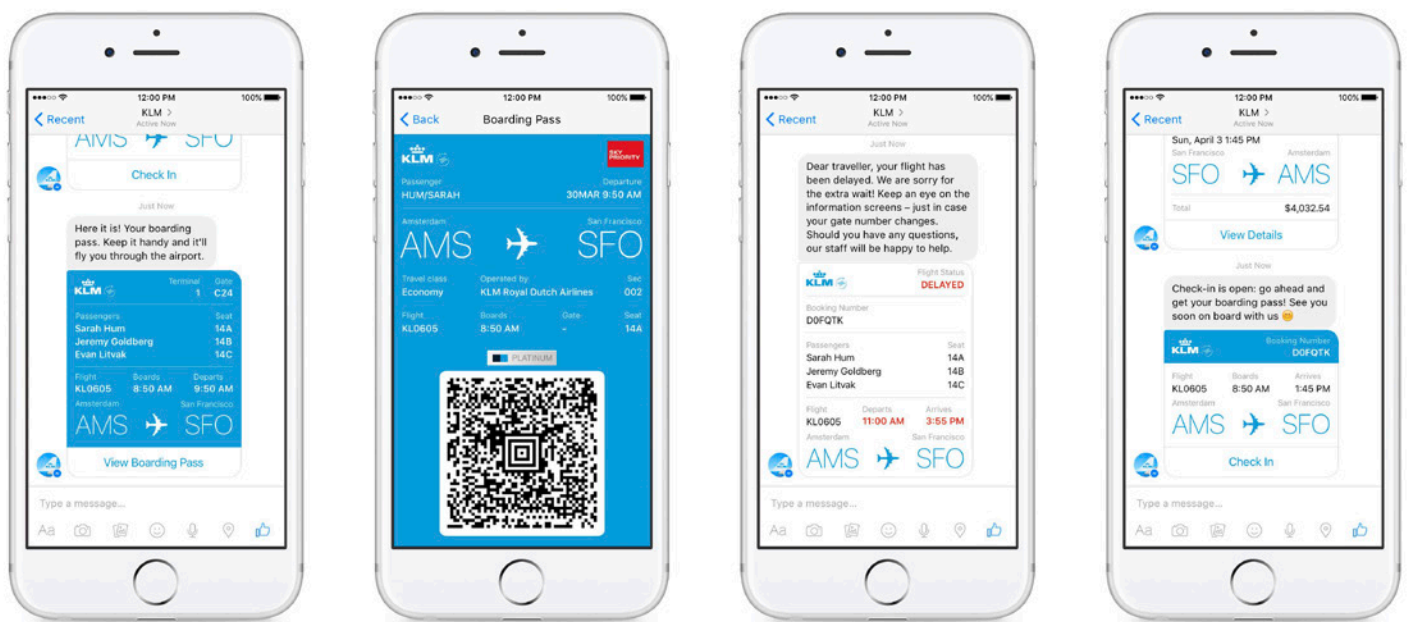


Fig. 5: Break-even relationship between UX project costs (K) and changed conversion rate (ΔCR)

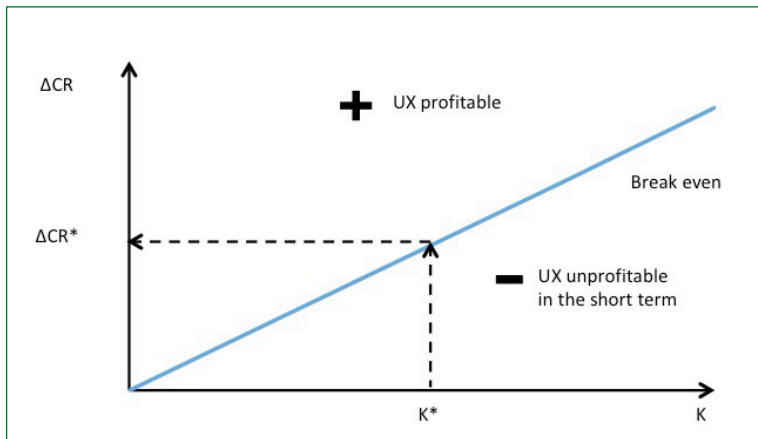
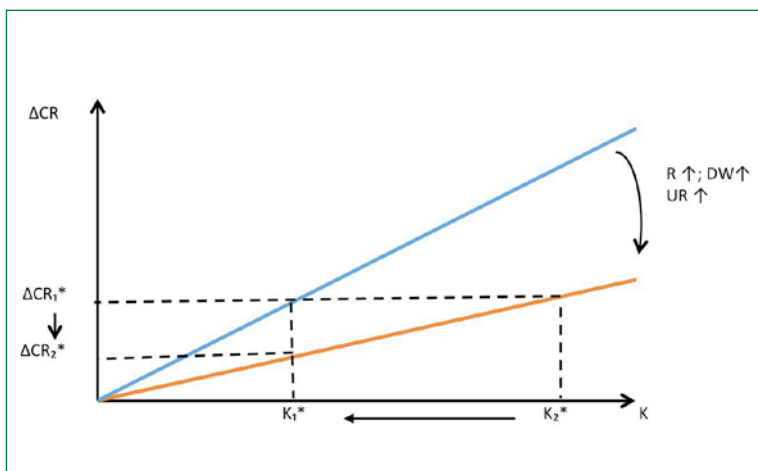


Fig. 6: Influence of business model and market power on the necessary changed conversion rate (ΔCR)



ready a reality with WeChat. With messengers especially, the user's condition and context are particularly relevant to success. KLM shows (see Figure 4) how well Facebook Messenger for example can be used for communicating with the customer after they have booked a flight.

Profitability aspects

Investing in UX research seems sensible under profitability aspects as well. The following considerations are presented using a transaction-oriented website but can easily be generalized.

From a profitability point of view the costs of a UX project (K) must be lower than the profit induced as a result (ΔG):

$$K < \Delta G \quad (1)$$

At the same time a distinction must be made between a *short-term* and a *long-term effect*: *short-term* assumes a constant net profit margin (UR), a constant number of visitors respec-

tively website volume (R) as well as a constant average shopping basket value (DW) of the buyers. The effect of the UX measures is thus reflected in a *change* in the conversion rate (ΔCR). The induced turnover (ΔU) is then given by:

$$\Delta U = R \cdot DW \cdot \Delta CR \quad (2)$$

The induced profit consequently by:

$$\Delta G = \Delta U \cdot UR = R \cdot DW \cdot UR \cdot \Delta CR \quad (3)$$

If we combine the inequation (1) with the equation (3) and solve it for the conversion rate, we get the *break-even conversion rate* ΔCR at which the UX project is profitable.

$$\Delta CR = \frac{1}{(R \cdot DW \cdot UR) \cdot K} \quad (4)$$

The project costs being K, any higher conversion rate achieved makes the UX project immediately profitable. This correlation can be represented graphically (see Fig.5).

A sample calculation: If for a website we assume a reach of 250,000 users, an average shopping basket value of €600.00, a net profit margin of 1% and UX project costs of €15,000.00, this gives a break-even point of

$$\Delta CR = \frac{1}{250.000 \cdot 600 \cdot 0,01} \cdot 15.000 = 0,01 = 1\%$$

If the conversion rate can even be increased by 1.5%² instead of 1%, we get through the UX project a short-term profit of €7,500.00. If the costs are €15,000.00, an additional profit of €22,500.00 is generated without taking long-term positive effects into account.

On the basis of the equation (4) it is evident that websites with a wide reach (e.g. platforms), business models with a high profit margin or high shopping basket values (e.g. cruises) show a lower denominator than comparable weaker competitors. This is equivalent to a smaller rise in the break-even line which therefore in origin "turns" downwards. This implies competitive advantages for the "big players" outlined above. For given project costs K1* they need a lower changed conversion rate ΔCR2* to pay off the project costs resp. the project already generates a profit when conversion rate ΔCR1* is reached. Argued differently, a big player can actually afford the project costs K2* when conversion rate ΔCR1* is reached. If the project only costs them K1*, which a weaker competitor needs to achieve the break-even point, the big player makes a profit from the project. Fig. 6 illustrates this correlation.

Fig.6 however also implies the long-term and lasting effect of UX measures. If in accordance with the User Experience Model shown in Fig.2 as a consequence the repeat purchases, a more intensive use, higher transaction values, active recommendations and positive market perception are induced, this increases in equation (4) the reach (R) and the average goods value (DW)³.

² In one of the few empirical studies that exist, Nielsen assumes higher increases in the conversion rate, cf. Nielsen, J (2008).
³ The associated required dynamic adjustment of the inequation (1) beyond the planning horizon is dispensed with here.

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Thus even a deficit increase i.e. points underneath the break-even line for the conversion rate can for a short time be accepted and seen as a sustainable investment.

These short- and long-term considerations show that UX effects have long-term effects and that these are quantifiable. Thus investments in this sector are possibly of more benefit than many a performance marketing approach with a purely short-term effect. A good UX therefore not only delights people and users of the website, but also the entrepreneur's balance sheet. This is in particular an appeal to small and medium-sized enterprises to concern themselves intensively with the issue of User Experience and make it a compulsory element of their own digital strategy. They must not here fall behind the big players in the business as has already happened in many areas of digital marketing instruments (e.g. search engine marketing). ■

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Design in the virtual space

Journeys back in time



Marion Rauscher

Virtual Reality (VR) technology and research into it have existed for more than twenty years already. However, it is due to recent technical progress that its applications have reached a satisfactory level for users, and this has re-awakened academic interest in it. “Virtual Reality” is defined as the use of a computer-generated 3D environment in which one can navigate and possibly interact, with the result that one or more of the user’s five senses are activated in real time (Guttenberg, 2010, p.638).

Independent of the technology or the device with which a VR experience is generated, two factors are required for the degree of immersion experienced by the user, i.e. their immersion in the virtual environment: physical immersion and psychological presence

(Tussyadiah et al., 2018). The more the VR user detaches him-/herself from the real world, the more intensive their physical immersion in the VR experience is. Consequently, at one end of the VR spectrum we have semi-immersive virtual environments, in which the user is still in contact with the reality around them. These include 360° videos followed by augmented reality (AR) experiences, which are computer-assisted expansions of reality. At the other end of the spectrum we have completely immersive environments which are created for example through head-mounted-display (HMD) devices. These can still be widened using headphones, gloves or other aids to create virtual auditory and tactile sensations. If smells or other haptic stimuli are added, physical immersion in the virtual environment increases even more (Gutiérrez Alonso et al., 2008).

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Psychological presence is the user’s subjective feeling that they are in the virtual environment instead of in the place where they actually are physically. As a rule, physically high-immersive technologies produce a high degree of psychological presence. Conversely, a lack of high immersion in the sense of physical immersion does not necessarily lead to a weaker feeling of psychological presence. A person’s subjective internal processes can compensate missing external stimuli (Ijsselsteijn/Riva, 2003) with the result that these still attain a high level of psychological presence.

Virtual journeys

There are numerous possible VR areas of application in tourism. The most researched area to date is the use of VR as an advertising medium. Several studies confirm the efficiency of VR



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as an instrument in destination marketing (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). The possibility to in a certain way try out the product beforehand helps the tourist to make a more realistic assessment of what they can expect. In this way, uncertainty when buying a touristic product can be reduced (Lee/Oh, 2007), or the motivation to visit as yet unknown places increased (Pantano/Servidio, 2011).

The central question is whether VR can help to sharpen awareness for a destination and ultimately increase visitor numbers. But the opposite aim is also interesting. For example, it might be sensible to restrict visitor numbers at endangered natural or cultural sites, such as for example highly frequented cultural monuments. In this context it would even be conceivable to use VR as a supporting medium to tackle problems in connection with the current over-tourism debate. The basic idea behind this is that with the aid of a virtual journey the destination can be made accessible to a wide range of visitors, but at the same time neither the environment nor the place visited itself are polluted. This consideration equally applies to destinations which are too far away, or inhospitable or unsafe, to actually visit. Moreover, one could make journeys possible for people who are themselves not able to visit a destination (Guttenberg, 2010). In this context, virtual travelling serves as a substitute for a real journey (Sussmann/Vanhagan, 2000).

VR and cultural heritage

New technologies in the cultural context

Information and communication technology already has a strong influence on visitor experience in the cultural field. Audio guides, web-based information systems or tourist information for mobile end devices are commonplace nowadays. Integrating augmented reality elements and even complete virtual environments (cf. e.g. Sylaiou et al., 2009, for virtual museums) are increasingly becoming experimental ground for providers of cultural touristic experiences. These considerations not only focus on im-

proving the visitor experience but also on promoting and facilitating cultural understanding, combined with an increase in the learning effect. Moreover, new visitor groups can possibly be acquired: on the one hand groups who for example for financial, political or climate-related reasons decide they want to visit a destination only virtually. On the other hand, modern technologies may attract interest groups who previously had little affinity with special cultural-touristic experiences.

Diverse empirical studies have devoted themselves to these aspects in respect of cultural heritage tourism sites. In principle they find confirmation of an enhancement of the tourism experience (Fritz et al., 2005; tom Dieck/Jung, 2017), even though diverse technical and content requirements have to be considered if the users are to accept the technology in its entirety. The educational aspect in connection with cultural experiences (Jacobsen/Holden, 2007; tom Dieck/Jung, 2017) and the acquisition of new visitor groups (Jung et al., 2018; tom Dieck/Jung, 2017) also find empirical agreement, depending on the form of the VR-assisted cultural heritage experience.

Without doubt there are not only advantages but also challenges which the providers have to take into account (Tscheu & Buhalis, 2016). The implementation of meaningful and rich content which ideally addresses

the visitor personally is decisive to acceptance of the technology. This requires a relatively high level of development, production and research expenditure, paired with the risk that the offer is in the end rejected after all. The reasons for rejection might not only be limited content and/or technical functionality, but also a lack of digital competence, fears with regard to privacy protection or the unpleasant external appearance, for example through wearing VR goggles.

Experience Economy

Chung et al. (2018) admittedly establish that for the typical visitor to a cultural heritage site the entertainment aspect plays only a subordinate role as regards acceptance of virtual technologies. Nevertheless, this aspect is becoming increasingly important, not least against the background of acquiring new interest groups. The reason is that, due to the abundance of media elements, visitors are used to being provided with information which is easy to understand and is communicated in an entertaining way (Fritz et al., 2005). What is important in this respect is above all the content form and the design of the complete experience the visitor has. This is why Pine & Gilmore already coined the term "Experience Economy" back in 1998, according to which customers expect a staging of the products and services offered and thus a comprehensive

Augmented and virtual reality elements play an increasing role with suppliers of cultural and touristic events.

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experience design instead of a mere presentation of them. It is not exclusively a question of entertaining the customer, but rather of creating a personal experience which addresses the customer in a very memorable way. Pine & Gilmore distinguish between four areas: entertainment, education, aesthetics and **escapism**. Escapism – fleeing from everyday life – and **aesthetics** refer to immersion in the experience. These areas are thus closely related to immersion in the sense of the physical immersion that the user of a VR experience experiences. As already mentioned, VR technology is comparatively well suited for promoting physical immersion. This can be induced by an attractive design and the involvement of different senses. The extent of user inclusion differentiates aesthetics from escapism. Active participation of the user in the experience (he or she decides for example what they want to see, or can carry out actions within the virtual environment) falls under escapism. In an aesthetic experience the user is admittedly actively involved but cannot influence it (he or she views a painting or a world heritage site while they are “virtually” in it). In the area of **entertainment** and **education** the user is in a certain sense “outside” the experience itself. Thus the purely passive viewing of a 360° video about a cul-

tural site falls under entertainment. Education takes place when the user is actively involved within their external observer position. Deutsche Welle TV has for example created 360° tours of some German world heritage sites (in the area of entertainment). With the aid of an associated app “DW World Heritage 360°” small tasks can be solved, with the result that the user assumes an active role while viewing (education area: cf. for example for Bamberg <https://www.dw.com/de/360-app-spielen-und-deutsches-welterbeerleben/a-47711548>).

Within the Experience Economy the borders between entertainment and education are therefore blurred and need not necessarily be seen as two opposing aims. They are in fact compatible and can even meaningfully complement each other. Telling secret stories, presenting extended contents and at the same time if need be promoting interaction with the visitor increase at any rate the value generated for the visitor (Leue et al., 2015).

Authenticity

The increasing experience orientation and the desire for entertainment, particularly in connection with cultural heritage sites, frequently raises fears of a “Disneyfication”. There is a fear that the entertainment aspect will play too great a role and the actual message will be lost (Dueholm/Smed, 2014). The actual value of a cultural heritage site is not recognized in favour of a pure pastime. Moreover, there is uncertainty as to whether the new technologies can authentically reflect cultural sites and their values at all, for with the new technologies the past is not just simply reconstructed but is at the same time interpreted so as to transfer it into the present (Dueholm/Smed, 2014). An exact understanding of authenticity is therefore required.

In the literature on the subject we find different opinions on the concept “authenticity”. The following paragraphs draw on the pacesetting research by Wang (1999), which differentiates between three paradigms. **Objective authenticity** is a property


which is within the visited object itself and can therefore be measured absolutely using an objective standard. The focus is therefore on the design of the object, in which the authenticity is inherent. By this definition VR environments would not per se be authentic as they are computer-generated and, in an extreme case, the object no longer exists. **Constructive authenticity** is when the object visited is constructed and mediated by the visitor’s subjective judgement. The authenticity of the object viewed is shaped by the visitor projecting their own convictions, expectations, knowledge, stereotype pictures, cultural values or social constructs onto it. As a result we get different interpretations of authenticity for the same object, even though the design of the object is still the basis for the interpretation. **Existential authenticity** characterizes the postmodern approach, which focuses on the activities and experiences of the individual. In the process the object viewed plays only a subordinate role. In concrete terms, particular experiences which arouse individual emotions in the visitor are made during a visit to cultural heritage tourism sites. These emotional experiences define how authentic the individual visitor experiences what they have seen. The focus therefore now shifts away from the object and onto the individual observer with the result that the design of the experience becomes of central importance. This means that something can be experienced as authentic although the object experienced is staged, is not represented true to the original or true to life or is far away from the original source of the cultural tradition (Chhabra et al., 2003). For the visitor only wants to visit the past temporarily and in a modified version and thus only those aspects of the past need to be told which are relevant to the authentic experience of the individual. This makes the relationship to the past more blurred and creative as it is not measured against fixed criteria but is consciously invented and therefore defined by the visitor’s feeling of well-being (Costa/Melotti, 2012). The use of VR technologies can consequently very easily be

TimeRide GmbH

TimeRide GmbH, founded in Munich in 2016, develops and operates local historical, touristic attractions. TimeRide is synonymous with stationary shops which communicate historical knowledge in an emotional way. Thanks to modern technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), in combination with haptic elements such as vibrations and slip streams, visitors immerse themselves in the life and times of selected epochs. Since it opened, the first TimeRide in Cologne has recorded sensational visitor numbers of more than 250,000. The second German TimeRide opened its gates at the end of 2018 in Dresden, followed by the Berlin location, immediately beside Checkpoint Charlie, in August 2019. TimeRide Munich is centrally located in the Old Town (Tal 21). In 2018 the company was awarded the renowned Bavarian Gründerpreis (Award for Start-Ups) and the Gründerpreis of the City of Munich. TimeRide GmbH also won the 2018 German Tourism Award. For further information, go to www.timeride.de

brought into line with the postmodern view of existential authenticity. The playful nature of VR enables the visitor to “detach him- or herself from their daily routines and obligations within an environment which separates reality from virtuality and the past from the present” (Dueholm/Smed, 2014, p.290).

Research projects in the Department

A research project planned by the Department for the 2020 summer semester will be devoted to the use of VR in a cultural heritage context. The concrete aim is to investigate to what extent Bavaria’s cultural heritage can be communicated using VR technology. The Department was able to win TimeRide GmbH, Munich as partner to work on the project. TimeRide, Munich (see info box) offers a virtual time ride through Bavaria’s history. A survey is to be used to determine visitor satisfaction as well as acceptance of the technology. The survey will thus address the issue of VR as a possibility for trips which in actual fact cannot be carried out in this form. The places can indeed be visited (Theresienwiese/October Festival, Neuschwanstein, Bamberg Cathedral, etc.). The VR technology however allows participants to experience the works and events of the past and immerses them in the true-to-detail setting of the time. Additional sensorial elements increase the physical immersion. In the way Bavaria’s cultural heritage is made accessible to the customer in the form of a fully immersive experience. In this respect TimeRide offers an ideal trip supplement to allow visitors to experience up close what they have theoretically heard or visited. 



TimeRide invites the visitors to a flight through Bavarian history.

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Beyond traditional learning methods

Why field trips are pedagogically valuable



Andreas Humpe

Field trips are a form of experience-based learning which assumes that the learning topic can only be effectively studied through practical examination of it.¹

In tourism education often classical lectures alongside seminars and exercises are used. Especially at the beginning of the course, this, from a pedagogical point of view, makes perfect sense because “freshers” first need to acquire a sound knowledge basis in the subject area to be able to apply this later.² In later semesters,

with already advanced “learners”, these traditional learning methods, however, quickly come up against limits: Tourism students now need opportunities to apply their acquired knowledge and visit touristic destinations on-site, experience and consume touristic products and services, evaluate marketing and management strategies and exchange views with the different interest groups.³ In this context field trips are a very helpful alternative to classroom teaching. As such, field trips extend the traditional learning process by facilitating the connection between theory and practice.⁴

On excursion with ITHAS: Various tourism topics are taught by some of the most renowned tourism academics during sailing.

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Evaluation of the field trip “International Tourism and Hospitality at Sea” (ITHAS)

Using ITHAS as an example, the educational value of field trips in tourism studies has now been examined by an international research team consisting of Charles Arcodia and Margarida Abreu Novalis (Griffith University, Australia) as well as Nevenka Cavlek (University of Zagreb, Croatia) and Andreas Humpe (Hochschule München). ITHAS is a one-week motorboat journey across lakes and rivers during which students from different universities all over the world take part in a so-called live laboratory acting as tourists, tourism students and future tourism experts. As an intensive study module, this field trip focuses on various tourism topics which are taught by some of the most renowned tourism academics during the sailing tour and practised by local tourism experts and specialists in the ports called at along the way.⁵ ITHAS offers interactive learning methods by giving students the chance to take part in a theoretically-based yet hands-on educational experience in a multicultural environment. The empirical study identified the students’ reasons for taking part in the field trip as well as their learning perception at ITHAS.

Research results

This study shows that there are multiple reasons for taking part in this field trip. Educational aspects as well as international and multicultural experiences are however most often named as reasons for participation.⁶ Additionally, three main reasons for a positive perception and evaluation of ITHAS were identified: social and job-related connections, learning and traditional yet committed teaching. Detailed study results can be found in Arcodia et al. (2020).

⁵ Cf. Cavlek, 2005

⁶ Cf. Arcodia et al., 2020

¹ Cf. Kolb et al., 2005

² Cf. Kirschner et al., 2006

³ Cf. Ettenger, 2009

⁴ Cf. Goh, 2001

Significance of the research results

This study shows that the reasons for taking part in field trips are manifold. Universities mostly have a heterogeneous student body and would like to offer their students as individual a study programme as possible. However, this is hardly possible in classical classroom teaching in large groups. Field trips thus offer individual experiences for differently motivated students. Additionally, the field trip was evaluated very positively by the participants and increases their satisfaction with their studies. Through this experiential learning method in an active and reflective learning environment, students were able to familiarize themselves with tourism products and experiences. The high level of satisfaction with this learning method is based on the opportunity to establish social and job-related contacts as

well as on the committed, hands-on teaching. Above all, experiencing and living out the acquired knowledge on site in a destination or in discussions with experts provides high added value in the learning process. The lecturers also benefit from the international contacts and the ITHAS network. In recent years, ITHAS has developed several successful cooperations with partner universities of applied sciences in teaching and research. 

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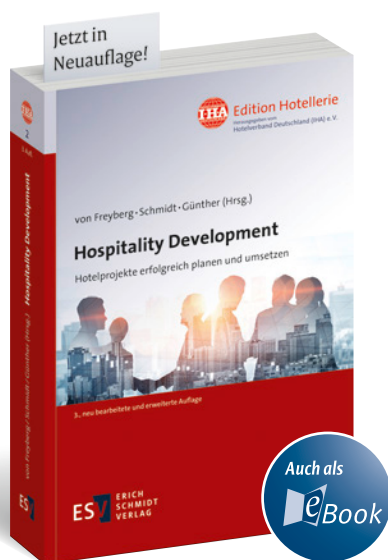
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Your gateway to the world

International range of courses at the Department



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Cornelia Liem, Christina Regul

Students in our department should feel at home anywhere in the world, get to know and understand people and cultures with all their different characteristics and look on the whole world as their place of work.

We expect our students to master at least two foreign languages by the time they finish their studies. In addition to English our students can choose not only Spanish and/or French, but also languages like Chinese, Portuguese, Italian etc. and in this way qualify themselves for their future career.

Intercultural competence however goes far beyond merely mastering a foreign language. It also means understanding other cultures and economic systems, which is taught in lectures on intercultural competence in the later semesters. The Department also specifically promotes immersion in foreign worlds, the discovering of other cultures as well as working on concrete projects in other countries.

For example, as part of the lectures and seminars excursions to other countries are regularly offered. A so-called summer school – ITHAS International Tourism and Hospitality Academy at Sea (see article p.44) also takes place regularly with students from six countries and international lecturers. For this, a “swimming academy” on antique motor gliders along the Croatian coast is set up. Every year ITHAS has a different main focus, such as for example “marine tourism” (2018) or “creative tourism” (2020), which is treated in more depth by the instructors in the form of lectures, workshops and excursions with local tourism experts.

International guest professors, teaching staff mobility and staff training mobility

The courses offered at our Department however also illustrate our claim to internationality. Most of the foreign language courses are delivered by native speakers and in the field of intercultural competence in the relevant foreign languages. More-

over, in every semester guest professors from different countries in the world offer lectures and speeches in English or in another foreign language and thus bring international flair to the Department. In this context Munich University of Applied Sciences has been organizing the HM Fellowship Programme for twelve years now: international academics teach for one whole semester in selected department at Munich University of Applied Sciences.

The Department’s lecturers, professors and staff members also have the opportunity within the “Teaching Staff Mobility” or “Staff Training Mobility” programmes to deliver lectures or work in equivalent departments for a short time at one of the partner universities of applied sciences. This is a good opportunity for our professors and staff to breathe in international air themselves for a short period of time.

“Erasmus” semester abroad

Erasmus+ is part of the lifelong learning programme which offers students

Incoming and outgoing students of the Department of Tourism together with the students returning from a stay abroad during a pre-departure event in the 2019 winter semester. Photo by Munich University of Applied Sciences

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the possibility to spend a semester at a partner university of applied sciences in another European country outside Germany.

At the moment an extensive range of exchange possibilities with at present more than 40 European partner universities of applied sciences is available to the students at the Department of Tourism. If the students cannot find their desired university of applied sciences among the Department's partner universities of applied sciences, they can as so-called free-mover students spend a semester at their desired university of applied sciences in another European country outside Germany.

As a rule the third, fourth or fifth semester is a good one for studying at a university of applied sciences abroad. After successfully passing their exams abroad, the participating students are credited the ECTS points. The semester spent abroad is thus not a wasted semester unnecessarily extending the duration of their studies, but a valuable enhancement with complete recognition of the academic performances achieved abroad.

Former participants describe it as a unique experience. Not only does it improve their foreign languages skills for the remainder of their studies and their future career, it also provides them with an opportunity to build up an international network, to get to know another culture better and to gain intercultural competence.

Foreign semester spent outside Europe

Many students already know Europe from their holidays or other stays abroad and want to gain new experiences outside of Europe. The Department of Tourism has realized this and is continuously expanding its non-EU offerings. At the moment there are partnerships with two Australian universities (University of the Sunshine Coast and Victoria University), one New Zealand university (Otago Polytechnic), one South African university (Durban University of Technology) and three universities in South America (Universidad de La Serena/Chile, Universidad der Cuenca/Ecuador and Pontificia Universidad Católica del

Perú/Peru). Moreover, in the Far East the Vietnamese University of Social Sciences and Humanities VNU in Hanoi, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University/China, the Macau University of Science and Technology/China, the German University of Technology in Muscat/Oman and new since the summer semester 2019, Taylor's University, Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia are available for a semester abroad. And of course we cannot leave out North America where we have the American university California Polytechnic State University as well as the Canadian universities Royal Roads University and the Université du Québec à Montréal.

Semester abroad also possible for Masters students

The Department of Tourism also offers Masters students the opportunity to spend a semester abroad, so that Masters students can spend their final semester outside Germany. At the moment they can choose between universities in Finland, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Partner universities of the Department of Tourism

The Department welcomes if possible all students spending at least one semester abroad during their course of studies. There are new partnerships with two French partner universities of applied sciences, the Université d'Angers and the Institut Paul Bocuse, as well as with the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and the Thai Bangkok University in Bangkok. Worldwide, we have cooperation agreements with more than 50 universities. The agreements concluded are always reciprocal, meaning that for every student who goes to a partner university a student from abroad can come to Munich – in this way too we bring international flair to our university.

Internship abroad

Of course we also support students spending their practical semester abroad. For this, students get offers from our student trainee database or find an internship anywhere in the world themselves. The offers range

from reputable companies in large cities to less-known companies in exotic countries. The students use the practical semester abroad not only to improve their language skills but also to establish initial contacts to help them start out on their later international career.

Information events at the Department on a semester abroad

The Department of Tourism has its own "International Office" to provide optimum support to students with their international projects. To convince as many students at the Department as possible to do a semester abroad, information events are regularly offered every semester. These range from presenting the partner universities to providing information specifically for outgoing students to financing possibilities. Guest professors or visitors from partner universities also hold regular lectures on their universities as part of these events.

Coming together of incoming students – outgoing students – returning students

There was a special event in the 2019/2020 winter semester for all incoming students from for example Spain, Finland, Italy and England, who met future outgoing students (semester abroad in the 2020 summer semester) and students returning from a stay abroad. All participants benefitted from the lively exchange of information on various topics, such as for example on studying at a partner university of applied sciences, accommodation, culture, country and people as well as on the faux-pas to avoid if possible. 

Information

Anyone interested can find detailed information on international issues on the Department's homepage (www.tourismus.hm.edu) or directly from the Department of Tourism's International Office:
Cornelia Liem (cornelia.liem@hm.edu) and
Christina Regul (christina.regul@hm.edu).

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Ihr



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“To learn you have to travel”¹

Internationalization aims and strategies at the Department



Ralph Berchtenbreiter

Why is internationalization of such importance to the Department of Tourism? In the formal legal sense, the answer can be found in the Bavarian Higher Education Act. It states that the task of Universities of Applied Sciences is to provide practice-related teaching and research, taking into particular account international cooperation between universities of applied sciences and at the same time involving trade and industry.² Munich University of Applied Sciences derives its three fields of activity – Teaching, Research and Economics – from these legal specifications. Our University of Applied Sciences image of itself develops within these fields of activity and within the context of internationalization, without restricting the freedom of the departments to explicitly develop their own system of aims and strategies.³

² Cf. Art.2, Abs. 1,4 und 5 BayHSchG

³ Cf. Hochschulentwicklungsplan 2018, p.8f and p.13

This however merely requires a department to confront the issue of internationalization. The particular importance of internationalization arises from the nature of our subject – internationalization is quasi a constituent factor of our Department. The UNWTO defines tourism as “(...) comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”⁴

If we disregard domestic tourism in the widest sense, tourism from the geographical aspect is not definable without journeys to other countries (outbound tourism) or visits by tourists from other countries (inbound tourism). The tourism system does not exist without internationalism. A department of tourism must therefore concern itself with this issue

Fig.1: Internationalization is a basic academic feature of the subject Tourism

 William W. Potter/stock.adobe.com

more than any of the other departments in a university of applied sciences have to and make it a basic feature of its academic work.

Internationalization requires an interdisciplinary approach

Addressing the issue of internationalization requires a far-reaching interdisciplinary approach. To understand the motivation structures behind travelling, you have to immerse yourself in foreign cultures, societies and places and get to grips with them. This goes far beyond the learning of foreign languages. “Tourism professionals” have to be inquisitive people who think interdisciplinary and who are open towards many disciplines. Intercultural competence is without doubt of great importance here. It provides the basis for understanding other cultures, societies and thus also the local economic systems. An understanding of “others” is the much more lasting benefit of



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internationalization. Looking back, the contents of lectures attended abroad may long since have changed or are forgotten. The experiences gained however still influence character development.⁵ Permanently, “Education and training” (Ausbildung) thus becomes “character training” (Bildung).⁶

No department in the world can reproduce this multifarious system in all its facets and required disciplines. International partnerships in teaching and research, however, offer a framework for promoting intercultural learning and intercultural competence. In academic practice, this requires a spirit of openness, partner-

ship and trust. International research activities allow tourism knowledge to know. Teaching content not offered by one's one department can be covered by international partners and in this way enrich and expand the department's curriculum.

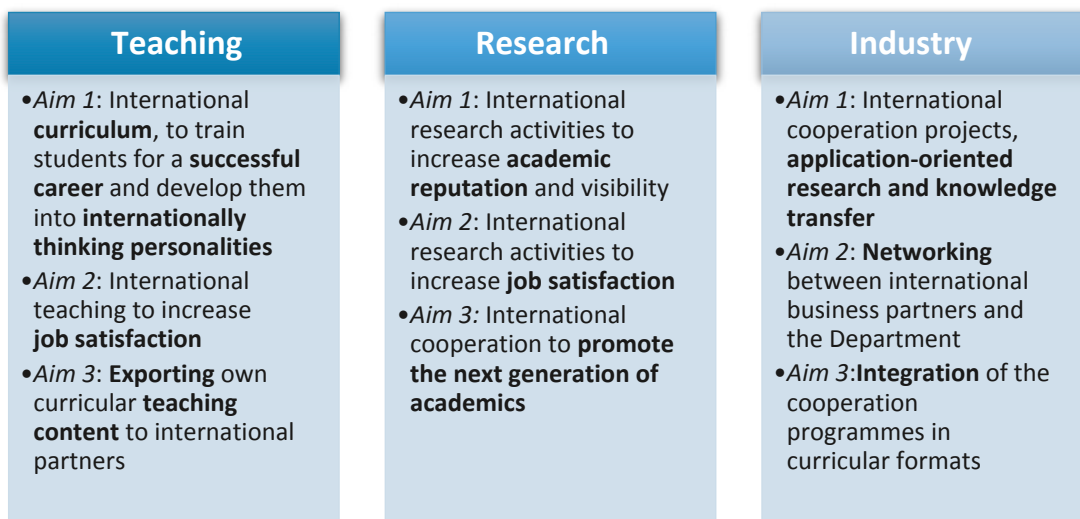
Cooperation with trade and industry and public institutions as well

⁵ Erasmus+ is considered the most successful of all EU programmes, cf. EU Commission, undated

⁶ For a differentiation between the terms “Bildung” and “Ausbildung”, cf. Bieri, 2017

Department of Tourism

Internationalization Aims



Internationalization Strategies

Teaching

- Build up and cultivate for the teaching aims partnerships between universities of applied sciences
- Create and cultivate curricular options for an attractive range of courses in English in the Department

Research

- Build up and cultivate partnerships between universities of applied sciences to carry out joint research activities and to promote the next generation of academics
- Pursue active networking with the academic community

Industry

- Create and cultivate curricular options for activities with international business partners
- Create, cultivate and communicate opportunities for applied research and knowledge transfer
- Integration of promoters from international business partners in teaching and research
- Communicate between the international world of work and the Department and its international partners

Resources

- Securing of resources for internationalization activities in the form of funds and personnel.

Fig. 2: The Department of Tourism's internationalization aims and the internationalization strategies derived from them.

as the department forms the basis for application-oriented research and knowledge transfer in both directions. The economically strong region of Munich is, as a market of origin and target market, an important location for many internationally operating companies and organizations and as such facilitates a diverse range of activities in this field.

The Department's strategic internationalization aims in the three fields of activity are derived from these considerations:

Teaching

- **Aim 1:** To create the framework for integrating the internationalization activities into our own curriculum in order to offer our students an academic course of study which enables them to pursue a successful career and develop into internationally thinking personalities.
- **Aim 2:** To create the framework for international teaching activities to increase the job satisfaction of the academic personnel, which has a positive effect on the quality of the teaching.
- **Aim 3:** To create the framework for exporting own curricular elements for teaching at our international partners.

Research

- **Aim 1:** To create the framework for the Department's international research activities to promote the Department's academic reputation and visibility.
- **Aim 2:** To create the framework for international research activities to increase the job satisfaction of the academic personnel, which has a positive effect on the quality of the research activities.

In contrast to comparable chairs at universities, the departments of tourism at universities of applied sciences do not have the right to confer doctorates. In the past, professorships in tourism increasingly remained vacant. This means that the opportunities to obtain a doctorate as the basis for the next generation of young academics in Germany are decreasing. The counteract this, Aim 3 below has been defined.

- **Aim 3:** To create the framework for promoting [our] own next generation of young academics through international cooperative opportunities to obtain a doctorate.

Industry and public institution

- **Aim 1:** To create the framework for promoting international cooperation programmes with industry and public institutions for practice-oriented research and knowledge transfer.
- **Aim 2:** To create the framework for networking international cooperation programmes between industry and public institutions and the students, alumni and academic personnel.
- **Aim 3:** To create the framework for integrating in curricular formats international cooperation programmes with industry and public institutions.

To achieve these aims, activities with a long-term effect will be initiated via the Department's *internationalization strategies*, within which activities with a short-term effect in the form of *internationalization measures* will be implemented. The following article (see p.68) by Celine Chang describes in detail an important implemented *strategy* in teaching for creating curricular options for teaching.

As regards **organization**, strategies and measures begin


- in the department itself (internal view)
- at partner universities of applied sciences and business partners or public institutions in the form of *networks* and *cooperation programmes* (external view).

The **target groups** of the strategies and measures are:

- **Students:** incoming students from international partner universities of applied sciences, outgoing students of the department at partner universities of applied sciences as well as students who do not go abroad and gain international experience in the department (Internationalisierung@home).

- **Academic personnel:** incoming tutors (teaching) and incoming researchers (research)⁷ from international partner universities of applied sciences, and analogue to this outgoing tutors and researchers as well as Forscherinnen@home who use the international networks and cooperation programmes to carry out distance research with colleagues.
- **Promotors**⁸ in industry and public institutions.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the Department's aims and the strategies derived from them. Most of the strategies have an effect on more than one of the aims.

However, it is only possible to work on all the aims if the necessary resources in the form of *personnel* and *funds* are available. The *securing of funds* for the Department's internationalization sector is therefore an important *permanent task* of the internationalization work. This work is conducted on a *departmental, university of applied sciences, federal state, national, European and international level*. 

7 Non-academic personnel are excluded here as these important internationalization aspects are concentrated in the central International Office.

8 For promotor model cf. Witte, 1973

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New International Semester

A benefit for the Bachelor's Programme



Celine Chang

As of the 2020/2021 winter term, the so-called “international semester” will become an integral part of the bachelor's programme at the Department of Tourism. The international semester refers to the fifth semester of the programme (first part of third year) during which all courses will be taught in English. Course contents will reflect international perspectives as well as regional ones. One key benefit is that international exchange students who do not speak German can attend regular classes and are thus able to share classes with local students.

Promotion of international perspectives

With introducing the international semester, the Department of Tourism pursues several goals derived from its

internationalisation strategy in the area of teaching (see article by Bercht- enbreiter in this edition, especially figure 2, p. 65). A key goal is to promote international experience and intercultural learning for students and lecturers. By offering a standard set of courses in English, international exchange students can participate more easily in the regular programme. Since the majority of exchange students do not possess sufficient language skills to attend classes in German, up until now we have offered a number of additional courses in English to meet their learning needs. However, since these additional courses are almost exclusively attended by international students, there are hardly any encounters between international and local students during classes.

In addition, the international se-

During the international semester, international exchange students are able to share classes with local students.

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mester also provides the possibility of intercultural learning “at home” to local students who will not or cannot participate in an exchange or study abroad programme. The so-called “internationalisation at home” is a key component of the internationalisation strategy of Munich University of Applied Sciences (MUAS). The fifth semester is the main mobility window in our Bachelor's Programme as the majority of outgoing students are away during that term. Therefore, it was a strategic decision to implement the international semester during that semester. Out of 150 students per cohort, on average 60 students study abroad during the fifth semester. In the international semester, the 80-100 remaining regular students will study together with an average of 25 incoming international students. Since the bachelor's programme starts both during the summer and winter term, the courses of the international semester will be offered every term.

Moreover, the international semester provides an additional designated teaching slot for international guest lecturers. On average, the department hosts four international guest lecturers per term who either teach on a block or weekly schedule. With the elective “Current Issues in Tourism” (s. table 1), we are able to integrate current topics taught by international colleagues on a regular basis.

Goals of the International Semester

- To integrate international exchange students into the regular programme
- To implement the strategic goal of promoting internationalisation at home
- To increase transparency regarding course offerings in English and facilitate planning for partner institutions
- To increase the number of international exchange students
- To offer regular teaching slots for incoming international guest lecturers

Implications for international exchange students

We strongly recommend that incoming students select the courses offered in the international semester (see table 1), especially during their first term at MUAS. If students stay for a second term, they can choose from a list of courses taught in English in other semesters or additional courses in English. We are going to continue to offer a reduced set of extra-curricular courses in English at the department as part of the university-wide programme “Courses in English” that comprises more than 100 courses. Our additional courses in English focus on specific areas in tourism or general management topics that complement courses of the regular programme. Moreover, students can select courses offered by other departments as they could before. Furthermore, exchange students can choose courses and language classes from the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Overall, even for students studying at MUAS for two terms, there are plenty of course offerings that allow them to achieve their ECTS requirements. Students who have the ability to study in German can choose from even a larger variety of courses of the regular programme.

Benefits for partner universities

With the international semester, we have now created a plannable and reliable course offering for our partner universities. So far, the courses in English programme was subject to changes depending on capacities of lecturers and the number of expected incoming students. In addition, due to internal processes, the final course offering could only be published a few weeks before the semester started, thus making it difficult for some sending institutions to communicate the offering and to check comparability with courses at home as well as eligibility of credit transfer in time. For some partner universities, learning agreements are due a year ahead, which created inconveniences in cases where courses were not offered on shorter notice. Often, incoming students had to make changes to their

Table 1: Overview of modules of the international semester (fifth semester of the current bachelor's programme)

Module Title	Subject code & titles	Weekly contact hours	ECTS
5.1 Strategic Business Simulation	R511 Corporate Strategic Management Simulation	4	5
5.2 Sustainable Tourism	R521 Sustainable Tourism	1	2
	R522 Instruments for Sustainable Tourism	1	
5.3 International Marketing & Leadership	R531 Leadership	2	5
	R532 International Tourism Marketing	2	
5.4 Electives	R541 Tourism	4	5
	R542 Hospitality		
	R543 Digital Economy		
	R544 Entrepreneurship		
	R545 Current Issues in Tourism		
5.4 Intercultural Competence II	R551 Intercultural Skills III	2	5
	R552 Intercultural Skills IV	2	
5.5 Empirical Research in Tourism	R561 Scientific Methods	2	5
	R562 Applied Research Methods	2	
5.6 General Studies*	R561 General Studies	2	3
	R562 General Studies	2	
Total		26	30

Notes: Colours indicate the four pillars of the bachelor's programme. Blue – business administration, green – tourism, yellow – intercultural competence, orange- research methods and statistics. *General Studies refers to courses offered by the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Studies. For module descriptions, please refer to the department's website.

course selection and were not able to finalise their learning agreement before the semester start in Munich. This will improve with the international semester. Consequently, in a survey with contacts of our partner universities, where we introduced the concept of the international semester, we received very positive feedback.

Further Activities & Outlook

Along with the implementation of the international semester, there are further communication activities in preparation. There will be a new flyer for interested students and partner institutions on studying at the Department of Tourism at MUAS as well as updated information on our website.

Overall, we aim to increase the incoming student numbers, as the numbers have been unbalanced in the past with more outgoing than incoming students. Last year, we conducted several surveys with exchange students and partner universities in order to understand what aspects in their choice of an exchange destina-

tion are important to them. According to the results, most important decision criteria are recognition of credits from home institution, course offering and ECTS available/ achievable. These aspects are then followed by the specific university as such as well as the city. Therefore, we assume that the creation of a plannable course offering within the international semester will meet students' needs in a better way. While generally, according to the results, MUAS is an attractive university for exchange students and the feedback of the majority of the returnees is positive, it seems that we might not reach some potentially interested students due to insufficient communication and marketing. Hence the new flyer and updated website.

Overall, the implementation of the international semester is a major milestone for the Department of Tourism on the way to achieve the goals of its internationalisation strategy and to welcome more exchange students at the department. 