Social Media Guidelines for Cultural Tourism in Rural Areas

A practical guideline for decision-makers and stakeholders in cultural tourism, rural municipalities, and cultural institutions

These Guidelines are part of the Cultural Tourism Training Course which has been developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership EUROPETOUR, a European initiative aimed at unlocking the economic potential of Europe's outstanding cultural treasures and empowering rural areas to harvest the potential of cultural tourism.

You can find more information at the homepage: http://www.europetour.tips

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Dear stakeholders in cultural tourism, dear readers!

For the past ten years, Social Media Marketing in tourism has been opening up new opportunities for marketing, market research and communication to visitors from all over the world. Social media plays an increasingly important role in nature tourism, city tourism, sports tourism as well as in cultural tourism. Guests and visitors alike have become "ambassadors" of the destinations they visit, sharing their impressions with their followers and friends via the "Social Media world". Stakeholders need to get ever more savvy when wishing to communicate the benefits and virtues of their respective (cultural) tourism destinations.

Guidelines on the use of Social Media for professional marketing are now widely available. The EUROPETOUR project, however, has brought about a much-needed, special focus on Social Media marketing for the benefits of European rural areas. Based on my own experience as part of the Social Media management team of the regional government of the Italian Marche region, I can honestly and truly say that balancing the interests of different stakeholders and interest groups can be a very difficult process indeed. This makes it all the more valuable to have a publication such as this one, serving the needs of rural stakeholders in cultural tourism using best practice examples to show how carefully managed strategies and their consistent implementation can lead to success.

Europe has an infinite number of cultural tourism destinations to offer, which is why visits to cultural sites still make for the main travel motive among many of today's most important target groups. I wish for all those interested that they will benefit as much as possible from these guidelines, which offer inspiration and motivation in equal measure.

In order to meet with the training requirements of the Erasmus+ programme, I wish for the EUROPETOUR Social Media Guidelines to be disseminated as widely as possible.

Ruth Mezzolani
Regione Marke Social Media Team
National Advisor of EUROPETOUR on Social Media topics

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Preface

Social media. Social media is about digital channels. About, networking, information, and (big) data. But above all, it is about people. Also, and especially, in cultural tourism.

Tourism and culture - both have a lot to do with emotions. And emotions are much more than just information and data. Social Media are perfect for presenting emotions in cultural tourism. They are about connecting people. About people sharing culture. People ask and people answer. Social Media do not work with big, anonymous companies. It is people who feed information into the Social Media channels on a daily basis. It is people who respond to questions and complaints on a daily basis. People who help and people who are helped. And so it is precisely these people who give a face to tourism companies and cultural institutions via Social Media. People like you!

You are present on the Internet as a person, as well as a representative of an institution in cultural tourism. But your organisation, too, can appear personal and human. By avoiding unnecessary automation between different channels. By integrating people in your organisation into the communication. By using Social Media to connect in a more personal, yet ultimately, professional way. By showing yourself.

It does take some courage, to overcome your own limits. But I trust in saying: Do it! Because Social Media is also a huge playground. You can always try new things. Just try.

"You cannot use up creativity. The more you use it, the more you have." (Maya Angelou)

Cultural tourism has a lot to do with creativity. So let your creativity run wild, let your ideas fly. Use the questions and feedback from your guests as a pool of ideas. Be inspired by the experiences of other institutions and organisations, be it in tourism, the cultural or a completely different sector. And then form your own actions out of it: What do you enjoy? What can you do well? Concentrate on this. You can take good pictures? Perfect. Write small stories? Wonderful. Do not have a problem with appearing even in small video films? Great. Do what feels good to you! But also try out things that you are - still? - not so good at. Maybe you are completely surprised by how much fun you have in the end. Being able to get involved in new things is part of the culture of Social Media. Because everything constantly changing. And that is good: "A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there."

The present Social Media Guidelines are designed to help you sharpen your focus about what various Social Media channels can do for your cultural tourism business. Use these guidelines as a cookbook with different recipes, from which you can ultimately create your very own, succulent dish.

Kristine Honig
Consultant at Tourismuszukunft
Blogger about Social Media marketing in tourism management

Introduction

There is no doubt that Social Media has opened up many opportunities in the development of cultural tourism, especially in rural areas. Urban cultural tourism has already seen the advent of high-quality, attractive and individualized tourism services catering to the needs of cultural travellers. In the rural areas, however, this development has yet to take hold.

Rural areas across Europe are home to cultural offers equally attractive compared to those in the cities. Many times, they offer unique cultural heritage sites. Despite this fact, cultural tourism management can often still be found to be in its emerging stage. In particular, service management on mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, is usually not yet strategically positioned.

Exploring European heritage with mobile devices © Shutterstock

The EUROPETOUR partnership has therefore combined its many years of experience and skills in digital marketing, Social Media management, and cultural tourism, in order to assist stakeholders in rural cultural tourism with better networking, qualification and (digital) development.

Ten European institutions and eight European partner regions have participated in the elaboration of the following guidelines for the use of Social Media in cultural tourism in rural areas. These guidelines are aimed at people working in cultural institutions, tourism offices, local municipalities, destination management organizations (DMOs), as well as individual businesses in the above-mentioned sectors. As Social Media Marketing can be used for both external and internal marketing & PR purposes, the target groups addressed in these guidelines are both visitors and guests to these institutions and organizations, as well as their business partners, network members, or other clients and stakeholders.

Besides, the guidelines strongly advocate the involvement of strategic partners in related industries, inviting them to support and share the benefits of developing cultural tourism in rural areas.

The authors of these guidelines know that you, as one of the "front-liners" in cultural tourism, will be particularly interested in the following three aspects of Social Media marketing:

- **Professionalism & Resource Management**: What is needed in order to target visitors, increase visitor numbers, and improve the quality of products and services through Social Media marketing in a <u>professional, timely way</u>? What kind of financial, time and other types of resources are needed?
- **Social Media marketing as part of regional and supra-regional strategic goals**: How to successfully link and network with public and private partners, in order to achieve and support each other's goals in the process?
- **Measuring performance and success**: How to measure the performance of various Social Media campaigns, and how to find out where (and how) to improve?

Most of the above questions are addressed in the following chapters; however, there are certain limitations to the wealth and depth of research carried out. This is mainly because there is a lack of valid data: Be it resources available at the time of research for the Social Media Guidelines, or staff / financial / time constraints encountered. Nevertheless, you will still find a wealth of information and suggestions in these guidelines that will help you in getting more business-savvy in the world of Social Media marketing.

With a great willingness to exchange and support each other, this compendium was developed as a guideline for colleagues in other European institutions, networks and municipalities. It comes with the benefit of practical orientation and collegial solidarity.

In the name of the EUROPETOUR partnership, we wish for the guidelines to be positively received, collegially accepted, and broadly disseminated.

Elena Paschinger / Karin Drda-Kühn for the EUROPETOUR partnership

How to use the following Social Media Guidelines

The chapters, recommendations and best practice examples used in the Guidelines are by no means exhaustive, nor do they claim to be the only suggestion for successful digital communication strategies. Many other guidelines have already been developed on the topic of Social Media and their use for (cultural) tourism management (see "Further Reading" in the Appendix); besides, we strongly encourage you to look for additional information in your individual country, destination or language you work in.

The EUROPETOUR team has compiled the Social Media Guidelines having in mind the following approximate user profile:

- Business profile: You are a single business, cultural institution, small town municipality, tourism office, local destination management organization, or other stakeholder in cultural tourism in a rural area in Europe (i.e. an area with a population of less than 10.000 people in their immediate vicinity)
- Experience with Social Media: You have already had some basic level experience with Social Media management, i.e. know how to use a Facebook page, are willing to follow the steps to guide yourself through setting up a blog and/ or have already set up a blog, have or use an Instagram account, work with a YouTube channel, etc.
- Better qualification needs: You are keen to improving your skills, to network with other institutions in your area, as well as with other business partners, and ultimately, your guests and visitors.
- A willingness to share and use platforms for exchange: You are interested in exchanging and sharing your own knowledge and experience with others.
- Know where to look for more technical support: If you are looking for technical "How-To" advice on setting up a Facebook page, a Wordpress blog, or any other Social Media channel for better communicating your business online, then please refer to the self-guided manuals that exist in each of the channels you wish to use. Besides, very likely, these services will be published and available to follow in a step-to-step guide in your individual language, easy and simple to follow and use.

EUROPETOUR helps and provides you with interesting case studies, top level research in terms of digital marketing, hands-on business advice and hints to follow on managing successful influencer relations. After all, you won't have to do it "all on your own", but instead you learn how to work with those who are already speaking up, and communicating on your behalf, i.e. turning your "fans & followers" into your guests and visitors, and vice versa.

Cultural Tourism in Rural Areas

During the past decade, virtually no other branch of the cultural economy, as well as the tourism sector, has developed and specialised as much, or as fast, as cultural tourism. It is one of the few growth areas that reflect an important "megatrend": Culturally oriented travel is mainly aimed at visiting cultural sites and cultural events in order to familiarise oneself with the culture of one's own country, as well as the cultures of foreign countries.

In rural areas, cultural tourism is predominantly linked to nature-based tourism, such as agricultural or food tourism, as well as spiritual tourism and creative tourism. This involves active engagement with everyday life and/or traditional/high culture. Cultural tourism has a long-lasting, often symbiotic relationship with nature-based tourism, for example in the exploration of historical cultural sites such as wine growing landscapes or biosphere reserves.

Outstanding religious heritage in Bucovina, Romania: Painted Moldavian churches © Elena Paschinger

More than anything, cultural tourism in rural areas needs strong networks of local stakeholders in culture and tourism in order to unlock its economic and social potential. This lesson starts with issues of accessibility, as well as maintenance, and site infrastructure. On a digital level, networks are important, too: The site, offer, or event, will have to appear online so as to be "visible to the eyes of a growing part of the travelling population", whether in pre-trip research or as part of a post-trip opportunity to leave a comment, a review, or simply to stay in touch with local institutions concerned.

Understanding the market: A brief overview of the characteristics of cultural tourism

At 7.8%, the contribution of cultural tourism may appear to be a relatively small part of the overall tourism industry in Europe. However, it is considered to be a highly profitable market segment, because it attracts many different target groups of a rather wealthy and highly educated background ("silver agers", quality travellers, families travelling with children, etc.). Following a recent study, Bulgaria can even count one out of ten visitors as cultural tourists, an indicator for substantial economic growth.[1]

In addition to cultural institutions, income and turnover are generated by many different economic sectors, such as retail, hospitality, catering, the leisure and entertainment industries, as well as other service industries (e.g. local transport, car rental, meeting facilities, the wine industry, small food manufacturers, farm shops, etc.).

Cultural tourism in practice: Traditional Easter Egg Painting in Bucovina © Bucovina Tourism

Cultural travellers can generally be divided into four groups:

- The cultural connoisseurs (education-oriented, detail-minded),
- The event-seekers (social aspects are important, for example, when visiting cultural events),
- The cultural consumers (especially in the context of entertainment), and
- The culture-oriented travellers, for whom a cultural experience is a welcome addition.

Culture, in short, can be considered decisive for making a travel decision[2]: According to the "Germany Tourism Quality Monitor"[3], "culture travel" is third among foreign guests and fifth among German guests. Visiting museums and exhibitions is the major reason for cultural tourism (74%). The second largest is urban cultural tourism, followed by visits of events related to customs and traditions (35%). The latter strongly hints at the attractiveness of rural areas for cultural tourism.

In recent years, each peak season in Europe's most popular destinations has brought with it a higher tide of tourists. In some cities, residents have even set up protest groups to pressure local authorities and raise awareness about the impact of tourists on their daily lives. This has attracted the attention of domestic and international media, causing embarrassment for the authorities concerned. Crucially however, this has also brought bad news for the tourism sector as a whole, causing lasting physical and reputational damage to the destination, and threatening to provoke overreactions from political decision makers, who have little understanding of the tourism sector.

It is important to note that this framework of "over-tourism" presents an opportunity to draw visitors away from crowded hubs and give them an alternative experience – especially for cultural tourism in rural destinations.

Over-tourism poses tough questions in destination marketing and management. Should marketing activities be suspended, and resources shifted to destination management? How to manage iconic attractions both in rural as well as urban contexts, which all visitors, especially those coming for the first time, expect to visit? Are surrounding areas/alternative sites attractive enough to interest visitors, and are they prepared? At what point is it necessary to limit visitor numbers in some parts of a destination, and how can it be done?

The following guidelines give answers to these questions. They will show you (new) ways in which cultural tourism businesses, destination management organizations (DMOs) and travel influencers (bloggers, YouTubers, Social Media experts with a large followership online) can work together. They are also a practical "How to" guideline for applying and maximizing the worth of Social Media marketing for your individual business, network or institution.

Getting business savvy: The need for constant education and training

A survey published by the EUROPETOUR partnership[4] strongly suggests that cultural tourism in rural areas does not just happen, but requires special skills, especially with regards to event management and professional networking. Experts are needed, who can offer both experience from working with culture and tourism, as well as having the knowledge of organizing economically sustainable networks.

The survey also highlighted the following needs for training in cultural institutions and tourism facilities in rural areas:

- Business development
- Professional public relations
- The smart use of Social Media, as well as
- Better, and more efficient, organization at the local and regional levels (round tables, networks, joint marketing, and offers).

This, too, hints at an important employment market that is expected to grow further over the coming years.

Further education is provided by the EUROPETOUR partnership in a series of events (see the announcement of a Bulgarian "Multiplier Event" as an example above, featuring project partner Angela Ivanova, of INI-Novation Bulgaria, in Veliko Tarnovo), as well as through the homepage www.europetour.tips/results/training-modules/. © INI-Novation / Wolfgang Kniejski

Understanding the relationship between Cultural Tourism & Social Media

Demand for cultural tourism has long focused on socio-demographic and motivational criteria, attributing culture tourists a certain age, education, income, social status, willingness to learn, etc. This was rebutted by recent research[5], but the majority of cultural travellers still fit in the picture: age 50+, well off, education-orientated, and mobile.

However, with the advent of the so-called "experience economy", there is a need to reconsider this traditional way of pigeon-holing tourists.[6]

> "As the travelling population becomes more and more informed, alternative interest groups emerge in favour of traditional categories such as nation states, class or gender. Increasingly, these have to do with, and / or are rooted in the proliferation of Social Media networks across the globe."[7]

Creative tourism is one such example, taking place both in urban as well as in rural settings. For the benefit of this report, we shall have a brief look at the emerging trend of creative tourism in rural cultural tourism, and discuss its growing potential through the right type of Social Media management.
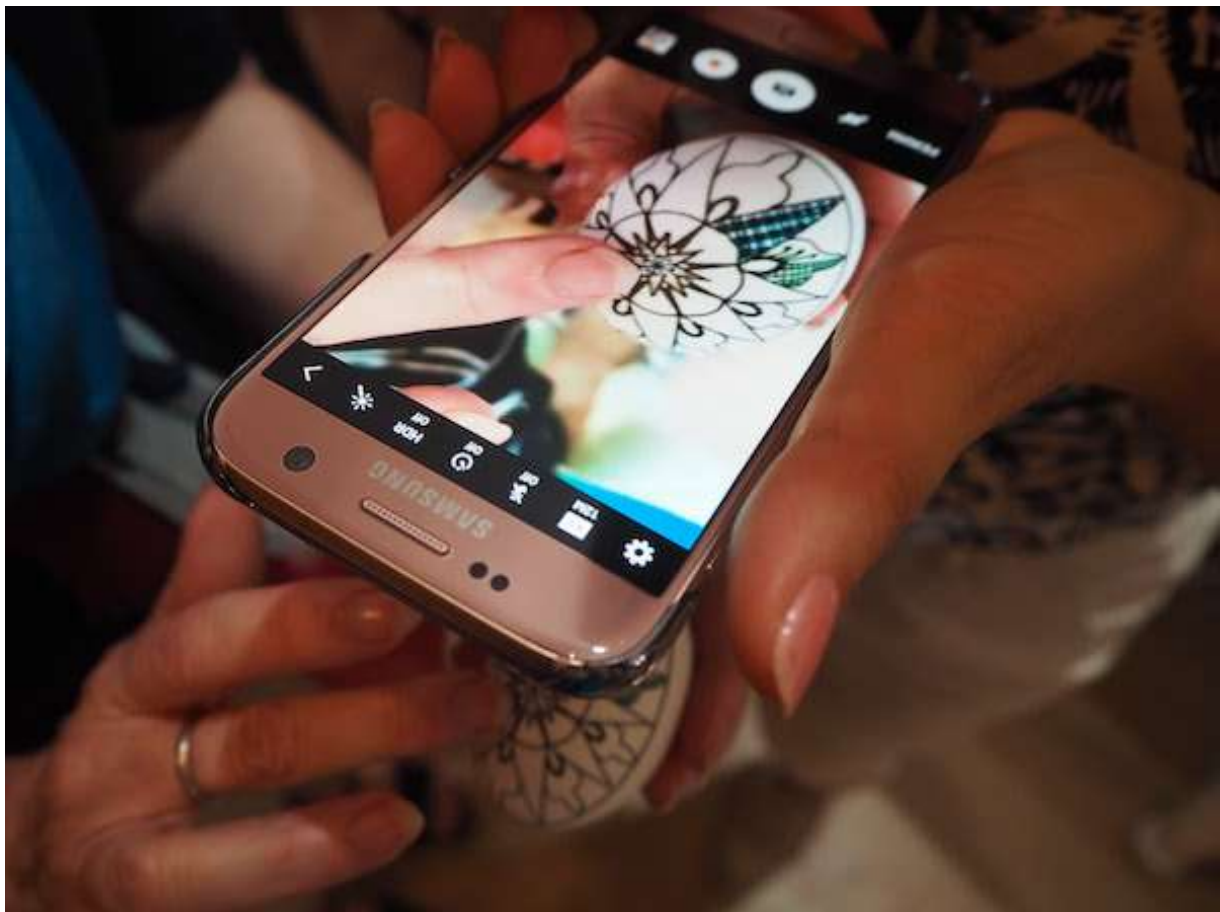
Creative tourism, such as learning how to paint traditional Easter eggs in Romania, especially lends itself to being shared, networked and talked about online, i.e. through Social Media management © Elena Paschinger

Creative Tourism as a growing trend in (digital) cultural tourism marketing

Creative tourism, especially in rural areas, has become an important strategy for cultural tourism to remain competitive within today's mass tourism market, all without losing any of the local authenticity cultural tourism depends on. It is important, therefore, that we look at this trend in further detail.

As an emerging trend, creative travel is rooted in the rise and mass democratization of cultural travel. The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) shows that the experiences most enjoyed by cultural travellers are those offering a real taste of the local culture. The more experienced travellers are, the more likely they become to add specific educational goals to their travels over mere rest and relaxation. In the past, cultural travel has largely been based on cultural heritage, such as visits to museums or monuments. With the rise of the creative class, a socioeconomic class whose key driving force is economic development through education and entertainment, this focus is gradually shifting.[8]

Destinations renowned for their creative vibe excel at providing travellers with a sense of achievement from learning a new skill. By creating their own souvenirs, travellers are more likely to have a lasting emotional attachment to the creative travel destination, to talk, blog, or tweet about it in a positive way, and to make a return visit. Essentially, creative tourism addresses travellers who are looking for time, space, and energy to unlock and unfold their creative potential, who truly wish to be in touch with the local communities they visit.[9]

Creative travel allows travellers to bridge the gap between being a mere observer and being an active participant in the local fabric of the place they are visiting. The buzz word in this context is "active" instead of passive. Thanks to active participation, travellers are as much a part of the overall travel experience as is the person delivering and facilitating the experience for them: Cooking classes require individual effort to learn how to prepare local foods. Craft workshops require a pair of hands to shape a bowl at the potter's wheel. Dance lessons require anyone involved to actually take the first step. The more "conventional" travellers are willing to include participatory activities in their trip, the more creative travel will grow both as a concept and as an established form of interactive culture travel.[10]

Paper-Making Museum Fabriano: Visitors are invited to craft their own artisan paper © Marche Tourism

Co-Creation and the Experience Economy

Travellers are increasingly "co-creating" experiences driven by their own individual knowledge, skills, and background. Not only are travellers able to learn from a certified professional, but they are also likely to assist in the creation of their own experiences based on the skills and knowledge they already possess in these areas. Thus, they are actively contributing to a unique experience for themselves and others, leveraging off the creative exchange that lies at the very heart of creative travel.

Basket Weaving in the Italian Marche Region © Marche Tourism

A Growing Appetite for Relational Travel through Social Media

The growth of Social Media, as well as the ubiquitous availability of the Internet, has succeeded in stimulating a more direct exchange between travellers and locals. Sites designed to connect the two abound, including Couchsurfing, AirBnB, EatWithALocal, and many more.

As much as this is true for the cities, rural areas are equally set to benefit from these types of ubiquitous, and easily available, digital networks. They are fast and easy to implement; they share and recycle knowledge, presenting geographically isolated areas with new means of accessibility that were not easily available in the past.

So how does it work in the rural areas? Read on in order to learn more from some inspiring and illustrative Best Practice examples.

Best Practice "Loulé Criativo"

Facebook Supports Community Building in Creative Tourism

There are many interesting examples of how to build (and maintain) a creative travel community online, and "Loulé Criativo" is definitely one of them. Located in the Algarve region of Portugal, just a little inland from the well-known holiday destination Faro and its surrounding beaches, the city of Loulé has opted for creative tourism development in order to safeguard, and promote, its traditional heritage focused on arts, crafts, and culinary experiences.

To demonstrate but one of their (digital) marketing channels, regular updates of their activities, newsletters, workshop dates, and ways for travellers to interact and participate in their numerous activities, are listed here: www.facebook.com/loulecriativo/
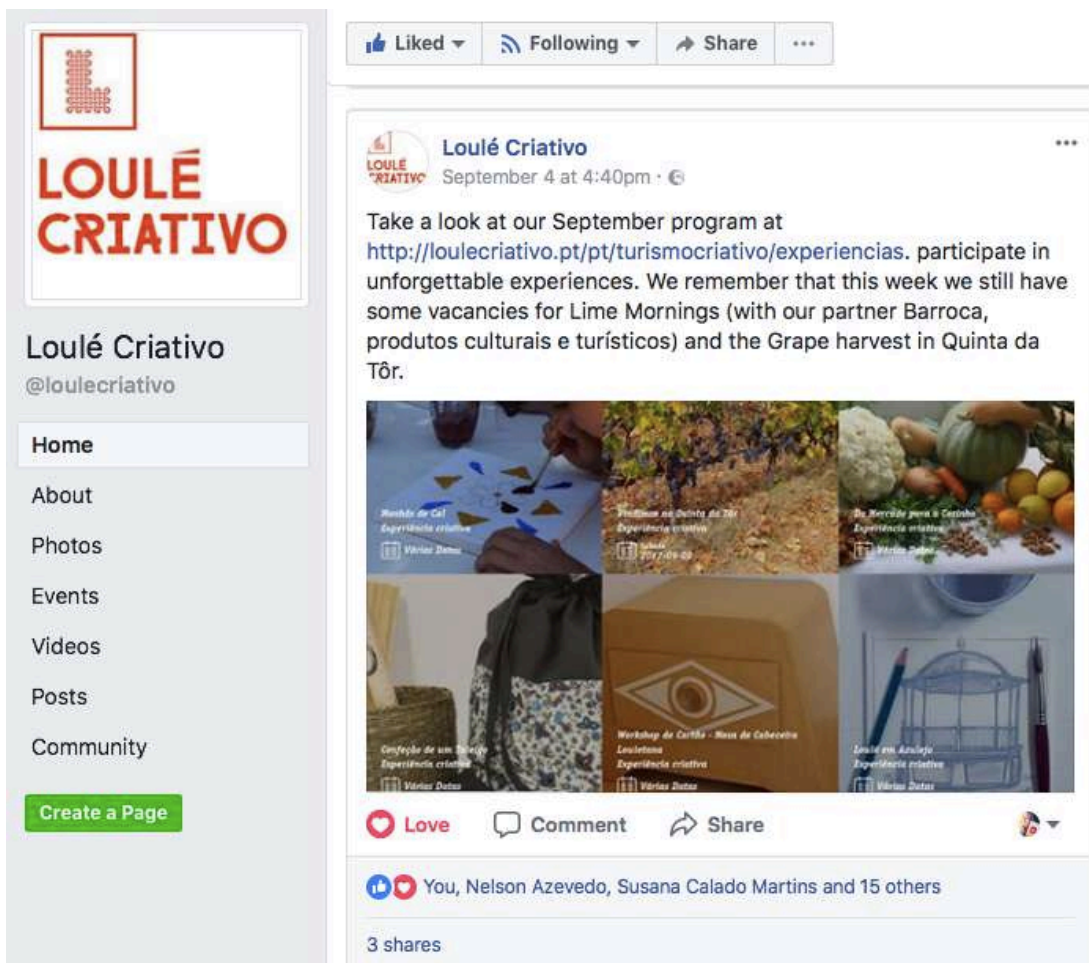
Screenshot of "Loulé Criativo" Facebook Page, taking a look at community building through Social Media © Elena Paschinger

Best Practice Marketing Platform "Creative Iceland"
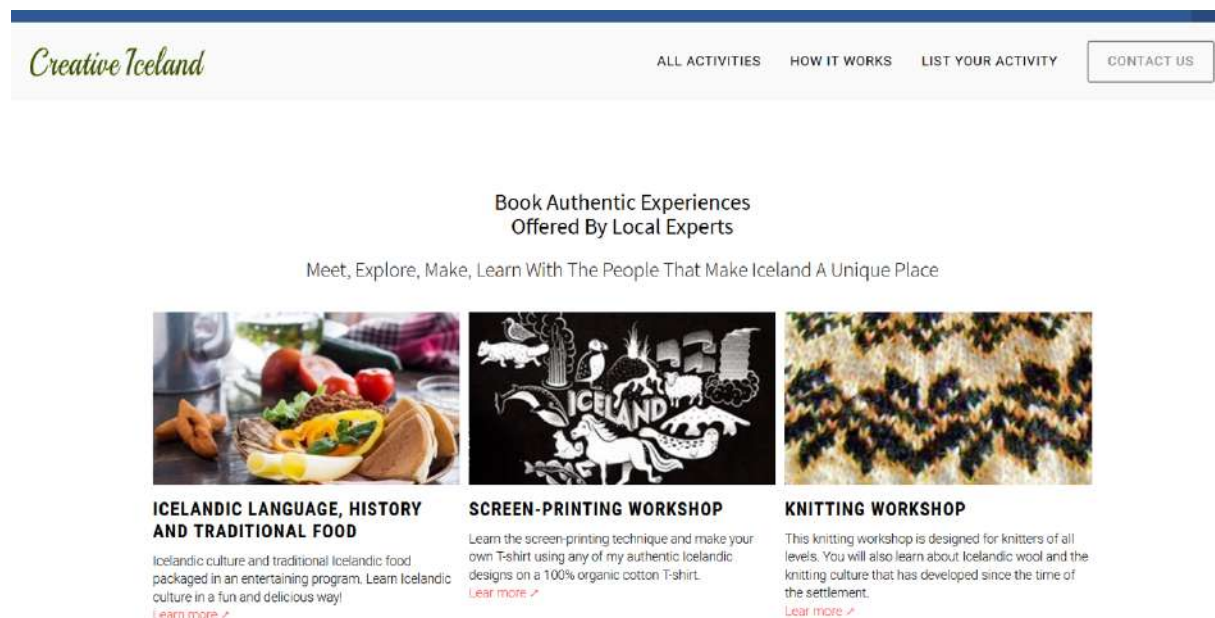
Authentic Experiences Offered by Local Artists & Experts

Visitors to Iceland who are interested in getting involved with the unique Icelandic culture are offered to book typical Icelandic activities, among them knitting and crochet workshops, letterpress workshops, cooking classes of Icelandic cuisine, photography walks, a visit to a creative cluster, ceramic and pottery workshops, Icelandic language classes, or creative writing seminars.

Artists and experts who wish to offer an activity can get support from Creative Iceland in order to create a web-based offer, and they are invited to market it through the Creative Iceland website. Participants to the activities are then encouraged to share their experiences on the organization's Facebook page.

Regular updates of their activities, newsletters, workshop dates, and ways for travellers to interact and participate in their many activities, are listed here: creativeiceland.is, www.facebook.com/CreativeIceland

Screenshot of the "Creative Iceland" homepage © Karin Drda-Kühn

Another Trend: Religious / Pilgrimage Tourism in the New Media Age

Religious tourism is tourism based on people traveling individually or in groups for motives of pilgrimage, missionary goals, or leisure purposes.[11] According to the UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organization, an estimated 300 million pilgrims visit the world's most famous religious sites every year. There are many aspects involved in these types of visits: Shrine visits, pilgrimage journeys such as along the Way of Saint James, monastery visits and guest-stays, leisure vacations or day visits of religious tourist attractions.

Religious tourism has existed since antiquity. Pilgrims, for instance, are said to travel for a number of reasons:

- To understand and appreciate their religion through a tangible cultural heritage experience,
- To feel secure about their religious beliefs,
- To connect personally to a holy city or place.

There is no doubt that religion has played a major role in encouraging early travellers and pilgrims to cross the European continent in order to visit sacred sites. Today, hundreds of them make up the world's map as important heritage attractions in their specific country or religion.[12]

Today's reality: Pilgrimage on the "Camino del Norte" Way of Saint James in Cantabria, Northern Spain
© Elena Paschinger

Many of those travellers are faced with an abundance of Social Media tools to help them planning and managing their journey, such as Camino apps for walking the Way of Saint James, forums and Facebook groups to enable an exchange in many different languages, travel blogs with detailed experience accounts of actual pilgrims, (digital) guide books, etc. Site managers at religious heritage places face the delicate task of catering to various user groups (from the eagerly anticipated pilgrim to the idle leisure tourist), while at the same time being tied to various public and private sector interests.

The following checklist contains the minimum requirements for effective management practices in the context of digitalisation and religious / pilgrimage tourism:

- Sound interpretive facilities at the religious heritage site / local town hall / visitor information office (including bilingual or multilingual information, (audio) guides, etc.);
- Safe access to and from the site, basic catering and refreshment facilities, further tourism infrastructure such as restaurants or accommodation in the nearby or not too distant vicinity of the attraction;
- State-of-the-art ICT (information & communication technologies), i.e. websites, blogs, apps, Social Media pages or other ways for visitors to get and stay in touch before, during and after their visit; all conveying the important feeling of connectivity, and representing the required care about the heritage resource visited.
- Provision of energy supply and Wi-Fi at religious sites and pilgrims' shelters
- Access to weather forecasts, e.g. by recommendations for best local weather apps, etc.

Signposting along the "Camino del Norte" pilgrimage route in northern Spain © Elena Paschinger

Best Practice "Klösterreich"

A Marketing Association of Monasteries, Convents, and Abbeys in Austria which runs its own "Social Media Working Committee"
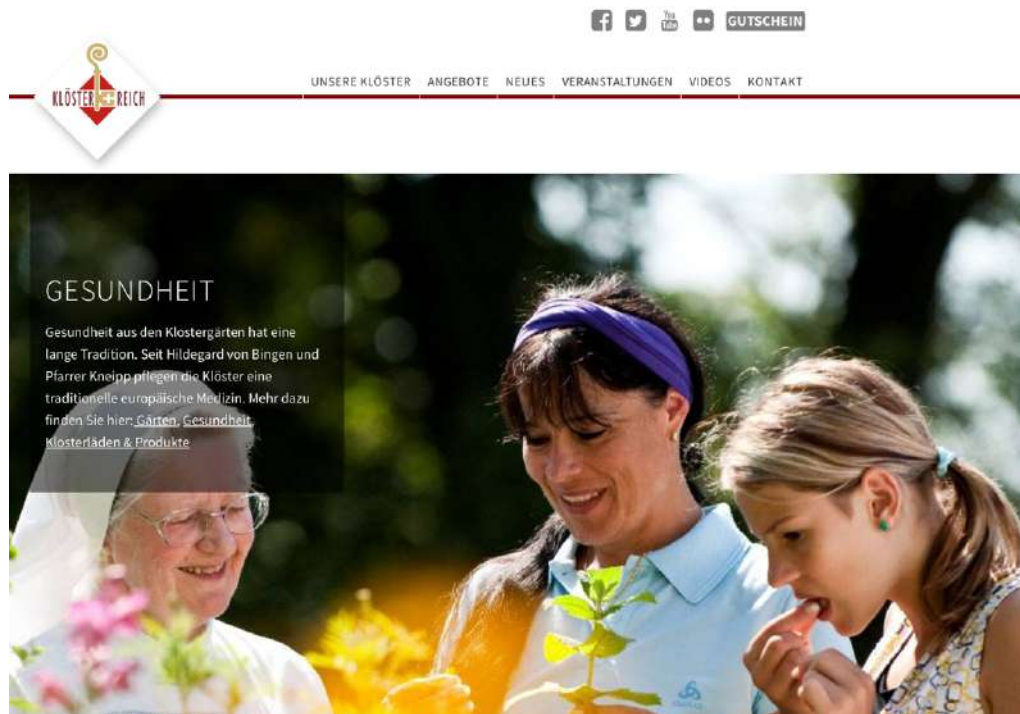
Screenshot of "Klösterreich" homepage © Elena Paschinger

The association "Klösterreich" has been established 20 years ago in order to promote monasteries in Austria and abroad wishing to highlight their seminar centres, to encourage active participation in monastic life, as well as to offer various types of accommodation in adjoining houses and retreats.

The network is run by a managing director and consists of a "board of directors" made up of a team of abbots, monks and nuns from the various religious orders and convents across Austria. At the annual board meeting, issues such as participation in travel fairs, engagement in Social Media, press conferences, opportunities for joint-level funding, or the web and (digital) brochures are discussed.

Health specialists offer days or weeks of fasting, and each retreat / community lives by a set of different standards of living that visitors and overnight guests are welcome to experience. Apart from fixed meal times, visitors can go and visit the surrounding area, retreat to their room, join the monastic course of events, etc.

Their Social Media strategy to promote all of these activities is a series of YouTube videos, which have been produced in an interview style format (see their channel here for more), one or two blog trips with professional influencers per year, regular Social Media updates and landing pages for different, special interest groups online.

Altogether, there are more than 30 monastery members in Austria, two in the Czech Republic, and currently one in Hungary. For more information, please check out www.kloesterreich.at, as well as their Facebook page, currently just under 2.000 likes: www.facebook.com/Kloesterreich/!

Best Practice "Religiana"

Community Building Through an App for Religious Tourism

Religiana is a mobile technology service for religious heritage sites under the FRH Europe network, a network safeguarding and promoting the rich variety of religious heritage in Europe. It aims to provide guests and visitors to these heritage sites digital (multilingual) information about religious building, their history, architecture, details of events, pilgrimages, to build virtual communities as well as to receive online donations.

Religiana is developed by FRH in partnership with both national and regional partners. For more information, please have a look at the website http://www.frh-europe.org/religiana/.

Screenshot of a SlideShare presentation on Religiana (the full slide show can be viewed looking up the following link: www.slideshare.net/FRHEurope/religiana-mobile-technology-for-religious-heritage-sites-69908739?ref=http://www.frh-europe.org/religiana/) © Elena Paschinger

Digital Storytelling & Social Media Marketing

The present chapter is a self-study guided learning chapter, involving knowledge gained from the EUROPETOUR partnership and their many years of experience with "Digital Storytelling & Social Media Marketing", as well as best practices to help you understand actual market trends. Special requirements in rural areas are taken into consideration.

It is structured along the following main areas for development:

- The Nature of Social Media: How to communicate with your followers, fans, networking partners & clients
- Social Media Management in the context of Destination Marketing (internal and external)
- Product Development through Storytelling
- Creating Editorial Calendars: Structure your content publishing
- Development of Strategic Partnerships through Social Media
- Synergies with digital influencers / bloggers / opinion leaders
- Monetization & Results Monitoring of Social Media

Each of the above will be followed by a short exercise, designed to revise and apply the guidelines to your specific business needs.

Look for the following symbol hinting at exercises for you:

Exercise:
Before reading on, what do the terms "Digital Storytelling" and "Social Media Marketing" mean to you?
Have you ever applied any of these in your day-to-day business decisions and/ or marketing campaigns?
How do you yourself apply the concept of "storytelling" in your advertising, both online and offline?

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The Nature of Social Media: Communicating with your clients & opinion leaders

The use of Social Media in the tourism and travel industry is growing constantly, as Social Media has become an important marketing instrument.[13] Tourists plan their trips and gather information using social networks; they collect tips from friends and other virtual contacts.

Social media as a marketing tool helps businesses to save costs, build and strengthen relations and to communicate with their audiences. Currently, most marketing strategies cover measures related to Social Media. The main advantage is to reach customers in different parts of the world and receive feedback in real time, employing minimum resources. Cultural travellers rely on information provided by so-called "travel influencers", in order to show the authentic side of the destination visited.

The mobile industry is widely providing solutions to support interaction between tourism and Social Media in every single stage of travel. Following an Expedia study of 2014[14], three out of four travellers declare that smartphones play a crucial role in their tourism experience, and over 5% of mobile apps available on the app store are dedicated to travel in 2015. Mobile apps and ICT frameworks are available to engage travellers when visiting a certain spot (i.e. a museum, a city, a region, etc.). At the same time, as travel influencers have become more established, many have built up high levels of loyalty and engagement among their followers, who, in turn, take their opinions and guidance seriously.

Communicating with your (potential) target groups may therefore also be done by hosting these influencers on PR campaigns, digital storytelling contests, or other forms of professional cooperation. "Influencers" are relatively new on the market, and are considered "digital opinion leaders" with a wide reach among their (often very specific) target groups (influencers = potential guests and visitors!).

The following are some tips for successful online publishing and communication with your followers on Social Media, be the internal (i.e., your business partners and other networking institutions), or external (i.e., your potential and existing guests and visitors):

Iconographic setting:
- Try to avoid banal and obvious images, as well as "glossy" and commercial pictures;
- The photos shared online have to represent the EXPERIENCE that tourists make of the destination which become a real and active social context;
- Always give credit.

Text:
- Short and direct texts, not too full of details;
- Remember to talk to users as you'd talk to a friend but never loose authority:
- Answer all your comments with authority, even the negative ones;
- Insert all the info in links, better if personalised;
- Use regular communication that addresses and incorporates current topics.
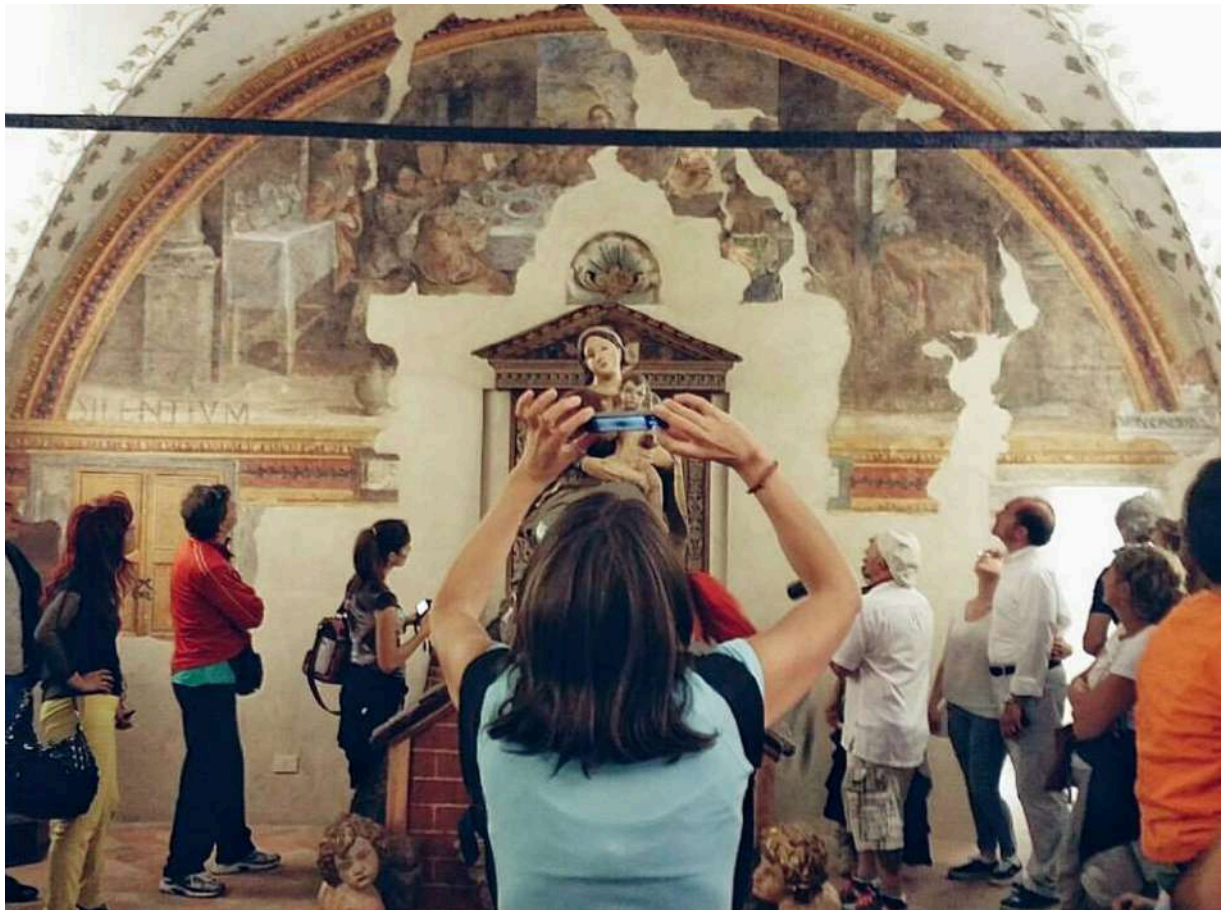
Instant communication, and image sharing, i.e. through the popular app Instagram, is a widespread use of mobile devices, as seen here at San Francis Monastery in Monsampolo del Tronto © Marche Tourism

Exercise:

How have you yourself been using Social Media in order to communicate with your followers and / or business partners? Based on what you find, try and make up a list of suggestions for future improvement to be discussed with your peers.

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Social Media Management in the Context of Destination Marketing

Furthermore, travellers have the possibility to write reviews, leave comments, and present different perceptions of destinations through a sheer countless amount of review sites and Social Media platforms. As a consequence, they become prosumers in social media, meaning that travellers are benefiting from marketing activities initiated by companies, but also getting involved in promoting and improving the very tourism products and packages they consume. Moreover, tourists trust more other tourists who have had similar cultural tourism experiences, instead of nice, eye-catching presentations of companies from websites, brochures, leaflets, TV, etc.

Cultural products and services well promoted and presented in the media become a stimulus for tourism, empowering the consumer and helping entrepreneurs with promotion and innovative ideas. This is both true at an internal as well as an external marketing level (see "Kreativ Reisen Österreich – Creative Tourism Austria" as a best practice example at the end of this chapter).

Consequently, Social Media contributes to the improvement of tourism service quality and enriches visitor satisfaction. As a business in cultural tourism in rural areas, you should embrace Social Media tools and Internet technologies in your marketing strategies for remaining competitive on the market, as well as to network with your business partners and clients. One of the most popular type of social media are blogs as they strongly influence a traveller's decision-making.

Exercise:

How have you yourself used Social Media on your travels before (both in terms of pre-trip research, looking for or providing actual feedback), etc.? And how can you use these techniques for your individual business, community or institution?

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Product Development Through Storytelling in the Context of Digitalisation

As there are many competitors in Social Media marketing, the digital strategy of your business should incorporate many levels of cooperation. You will, most importantly, have to master the art of working with digital influencers in driving real visitor numbers, and increase income, for your business.

In the digital (Social Media) age, the four P's of classic marketing ("Product, Price, Place, Promotion") continue to shift in favour of the four C's: "Creating, Curating, Connecting, Culture." This is reflected in the paradigm change that continues to affect not only Social Media marketing, or cultural tourism in rural areas, but also society as a whole. The basic notion is that we create something, then share it, link it, network it, moderate discussions about it, instead of trying to convince people of its benefits with traditional advertising.

Rather, it is all about allowing your customers / guests / visitors / clients to experience your product, become ambassadors for it, and moderate their own discussion / feedback about it.

Digital storytelling, in particular, should be:

- Lively & attractive
- From a personal point of view
- Relevant to target audiences
- Full of emotions
- Use blogs as a medium for dialogue.

An example for creating a digital storyboard in the context of rural cultural tourism: #WieWirLeben
http://stories.urlaubambauernhof.com

By telling local, authentic stories about their members, the Carinthia Farm Holiday Association uses different channels of digital storytelling to promote the concept (hashtag) #WieWirLeben, i.e. "The Way We Live".
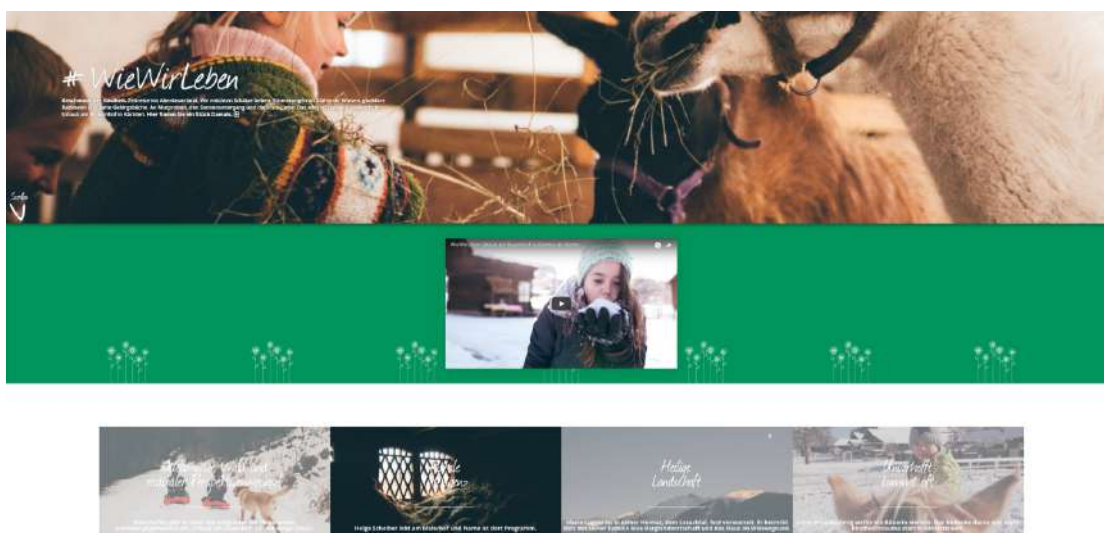
Screenshot of the above-mentioned website © Elena Paschinger

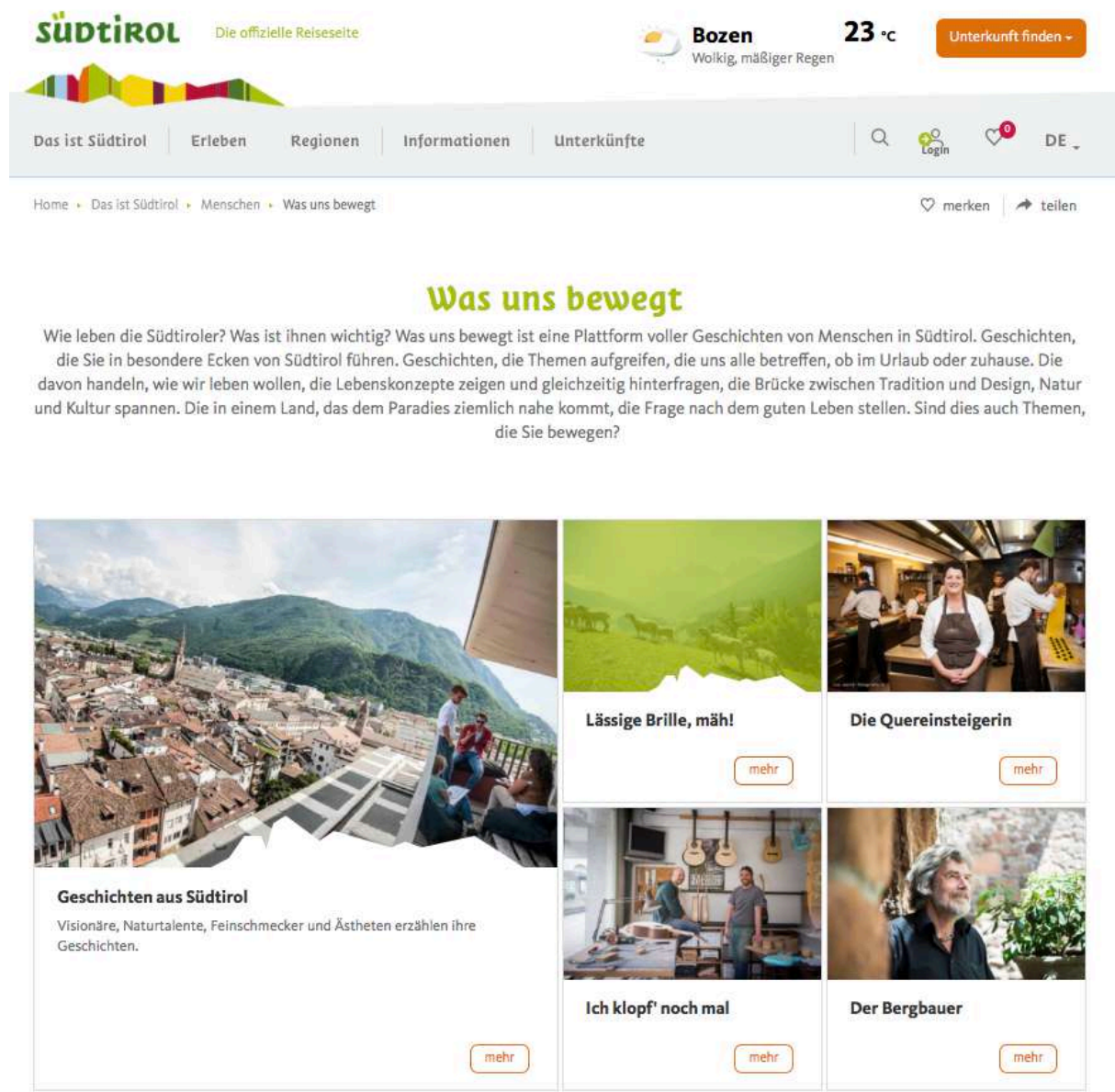Another example for successful cross-category communication, and professional use of Social Media marketing for generatings bookings, is the province of "Südtirol / Alto Adige" in Northern Italy: https://www.suedtirol.info/de/das-ist-suedtirol/menschen/wasunsbewegt (the claim being "What Drives Us – Stories about people in South Tyrol).

The following screenshot depicts an overview of how storytelling works to link up with offers (workshops, overnight stays, museums, etc.) that may then directly be booked through the website. Furthermore, there is a lot of engagement on the Facebook page, highlighting real conversions and thus generating bookings: https://www.facebook.com/altoadige.suedtirol.

Screenshot of the above-mentioned website © Elena Paschinger

Exercise:

Try to come up with an example for each of the "four C's",
Creating, Curating, Connecting, and Culture.
Which topics are at the heart of your digital conversation?
Where do you connect with your clients / business partners, and
how? And what kind of culture, i.e. language, images, etc. do you
use in order to stimulate / start talking about your business?

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Choosing the right Social Media Channels for your Audiences

Many different Social Media channels are available in order to network, link and present your business, cultural institution, network or destination online. The following is an overview of the most common ones available, encouraging you to identify the most suitable tools for your business:

- Facebook : Facebook has been around for more than ten years and is perhaps the most powerful Social Media tool available, despite recent concerns of its overt commercialization and data handling. It is particularly strong when it comes to communicating videos, photos, and events, immediately creating and attracting an audience for your product or service. You can set up a Facebook page for your business / community / network etc. after you have registered as a personal user at www.facebook.com. Another important aspect is joining, or creating, groups of interest around your product, service, or destination, thereby becoming an opinion leader and stimulating discussions among your peers, followers, potential and existing clients.

- Instagram : Instagram is a photo-based app available for your smartphone which again requires you to register, either as a business or as a private person account. It is visually attractive and works through the use and proliferation of hashtags (= Social Media key words), such as #CreativeTravel #inCostaBrava. Any user typing in those key words either on Instagram, or in Google, will likely find a whole host of images related to their particular search, thereby encouraging visitor information and travel flows. Choosing the "right" image to publish in the name of your institution, you should keep in mind that the particular picture should be visually appealing, convey a message and stimulate a discussion among your followers (i.e. people following the news of your institution's account). You can also easily integrate and display your Instagram photo feed on your website, adding a sense of actual sharing and participation to an otherwise possibly static page.

- Twitter : Twitter is a short message service limited to 280 characters per tweet; it again relies heavily on the use and function of hashtags, which drive entire news businesses and campaigns around them. As with the above mentioned Social Media channels, Twitter can become a very powerful tool for communication, especially when addressing English-speaking and emerging global markets.

- YouTube, Vimeo, etc. : YouTube, Vimeo and other broadcasting services have been designed to upload and share your own videos, thereby adding "video" as an important digital marketing trend to the portfolio of presenting your business online. YouTube itself is said to be the world's second largest search engine after Google, which hints at just how powerful the search for (and use of) these types of broadcasting services really is. You can easily embed YouTube or Vimeo videos into your website, and integrate them with the overall of your Social Media and web activities.

- Flickr : Flickr is another photo sharing website with a powerful impact on search engine results. This means that by publishing photographs tagged with the name of your business, product or destination, those images will increasingly show up in the search results and drive visitors to your website, where you can embed them. The added advantage of publishing pictures first on Flickr and integrating them as images or galleries on your website is that they will appear in one of the major search engines, next to other services like Google or YouTube.

- Setting up your own blog is another strategy of course. You can integrate all of the above mentioned channels, and still host your own discussion, on your own website. WordPress is the most used blog software currently, and setting up a blog takes less than one hour.

- Google services : You may like it or not, but Google offers a broad range of services, which can add considerable value to your social media marketing. For getting an overview what might work for your institution and your business, you may join one of the free Google seminars taking place all over Europe. These tools are worth to be considered: Google+ (for staying in touch), Google AdWords (advertising to people the moment they search for what you offer), Google Analytics (an analysis tool for your media) and Google Location Services (like localization on maps). All these tools can increase your search ranks and associate with your particular information service and style. Google+ e.g. is easily set up once you have a Gmail account, and perfectly links in with other Google web services.

Exercise:

Carry out a short SWOT analysis (see EUROPETOUR Training Module 3, Chapter 2.1 under Methods for Strategic Analysis) for a guideline of how to establish a SWOT analysis) of the Social Media channels you use, or wish to use, for your business.

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Creating Editorial Calendars: Structure your Content Publishing to Form a Strategy

Structuring the content you create and share online can help you measure its targets results and relieve you off the pressure of "having to post something now", over being more savvy in the way you present and share information.

- In order to "organize, inspire & communicate", remind yourself of important dates such as for instance the World Tourism Day / International World Heritage Days, and build a content strategy around it. This helps to leverage off frequently used hashtags and search engine requests around such dates.

- As a general rule: Do not just think about what to write, but also when best to publish it.

- Google calendars are one of the best tools available in terms of a quick, easy-to-use and collaborative editorial calendar to use.

- Starting a series of regular features, such as blog posts, video posts, photo contests, etc. allows you to maintain a timeline of publication, and a better overview, about it.

- All of the above-mentioned efforts will help you being perceived as far more strategic and professional concerning your digital publications. They also help you to unify your brand message and tone of voice across platforms, making you a stronger negotiator and more solid about pitches with brands and other cooperation partners.

Exercise:

Draft an Editorial Calendar of your most important Social Media content (images, short announcements, events or videos) over the course of the next three to six months.

Be specific about who presents what, and when, to whom (always keep in mind the audience you are addressing, i.e. internal marketing / relationship management with your partners and their Social Media profiles, as well as external marketing, i.e. communication with your followers and fans = potential guests and visitors).

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Working with Influencers: Reaping the Benefits of Social Media Expertise for your Business

At times, all of the above-mentioned tools may be too time-consuming to do it all on your own. In this case, for instance together with your local Destination Management Organization (DMO), or tourism board, you may consider working together with leading digital opinion leaders, bloggers, Social Media experts, etc. Such business is usually done in the form of campaigns, as well as mid- to long-term contracts, and will have to fit into the tourism strategy of your area. Funding may be available from your local tourism partners, DMOs, even the European Union who funds rural area development by supporting cutting edge technology, and Social Media marketing (more information about this can be found in the Training Module 7, "Financing", of the EUROPETOUR partnership).

Further resources, and web articles, for examples of such forms of cooperation, are available here: thesocialtravelsummit.com/think-tank.

Help in times of crisis

The impact of tourism on local businesses is mostly felt when tourism arrivals fall suddenly, following crises such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks. It is understood that different crises require different responses. In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, tourism marketing is usually suspended as its effect is lost behind mainstream news coverage. Furthermore, discussing a crisis requires knowledge of the issues involved and care in discussing them, especially in political crises.

Nevertheless, travel influencers 'on the ground' can be of real assistance during the recovery phase. In those times, you will benefit from working together with travel influencers you have worked with before, because they really know your product and destination (this also underlines the importance of establishing long-term relationships). The following benefits of working with digital travel influencer following a crisis can be made:

- Travel influencers can offer authentic personal testimony of the real situation in the destination.
- They can offer a new angle, or even a counter narrative to mainstream media coverage.
- They can be particularly helpful in 'giving a voice' to smaller destinations, whose authorities have less experience or leverage in shaping mainstream media coverage.
- They are highly experienced in using social media and can offer support to local businesses that may need it.

You can also read more about specific communication skills for your business in the EUROPETOUR Training Module 5, "Communication".

Exercise:

Spend some time online researching the most important travel influencers (YouTube, Facebook, blogs, etc.) in your (geographical) area. Who can you address, or turn to, for ideas of cooperation? What other networks are available?

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Monetary Valuation & Monitoring the Results of Social Media

Discussing professional new media relations, the issue of tracking, monitoring, and monetizing activities comes to mind. Social Media Marketing not only means publishing, but also listening to your audience. The most important goal of Web Marketing is "Conversion", i.e. the action you like your users to take once they visit your website, blog, or Social Media profile. Such action may be the search for information, subscribing to a particular service, or a purchase. The most valuable point is that conversion produces monitoring data.

Best Practice "gartenFESTWOCHENtulln"

Monitoring Social Media Activities

In this context, it can be helpful to create a so-called "Social Wall"
displaying, in real-time, all content that has been created and published, across all websites and Social Media platforms following a certain, pre-defined hashtag : #gfwt17 in this case.

The website can be accessed here: www.seejay.cloud/donau_niederoesterreich/gfwt17/

Screenshot of "gartenFESTWOCHENtulln" homepage, where all posts are gathered under the Social Media tracking hashtag #gfwt17 © Elena Paschinger

A cumulative statistic / virtual storyboard like this can help tracking activities across different sectors and industries, as well as media used, such as video, audio, image, or words. At the end of the campaign (the festival lasted for nine days in June 2017), visitor numbers have increased by well over 200% compared with the previous year, up to almost 11.000 instead of just over 2.000. The reason is the cumulative reach of all online marketing activities done, and visualised here, including blog trips, Google advert campaigns, newsletter marketing, etc.

Exercise:

In case you have already defined a hashtag for your business, community, or institution: What is the name of your main hashtag, and how can you use it to build up a community, or monitor the results of it?

In case you have not yet defined a hashtag: How could you come up with one, and who can help you make suggestions?

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Social Media Best Practice for Cultural Tourism in Europe

In this chapter, we are going to have a look at examples showing how different networks for cultural tourism in rural areas across Europe have used storytelling, and Social Media, as a means of product development.

All of them are credited for their degree of innovation, networking success, and management policies.

Catalunya Experience

"Catalunya Experience" is a Facebook page set up and managed by the Catalan Tourism Board located in Barcelona, Spain. It has further European subsidiaries in countries such as The Netherlands, England, or Germany.

This case will look at the German edition of „Catalunya Experience", located as a physical office in Frankfurt and run by a (bilingual) team of Social Media professionals and communication experts. All communication is explicitly done in German language. It is impressive that an entire team is employed to manage answers to each & every comment made in the dialogue field of the Facebook posts- a considerable task, given the number of almost two million (!) subscribers to its page and literally dozens, if sometimes not hundreds, of comments to the regular posts. Those posts appear between three to five times a week, in an amiable, engaging way recommending cultural festivals, places of interest, videos and photos aimed at being shared by the followers. A sense of community is achieved effortlessly, and regular visitors and fans are encouraged to participate in community building activities, such as prize draws, Q & A about the destination, etc.
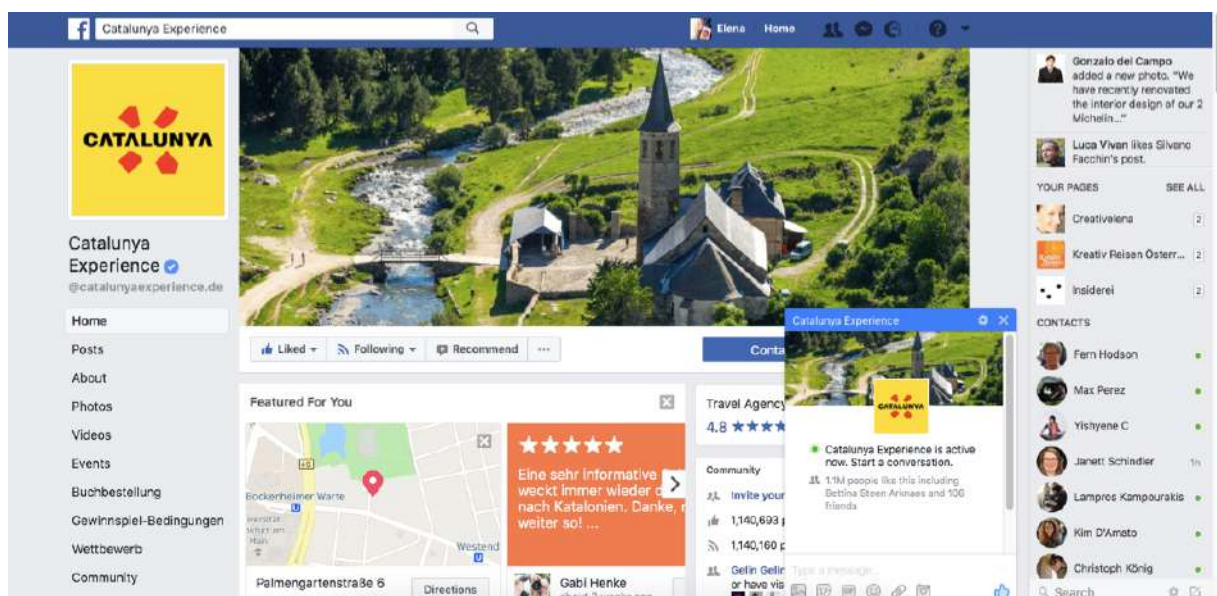
For further information, please check out the "Catalunya Experience" Facebook page.

Camino Lebaniego Digital

The "Digital Lebaniego Pilgrim's Project" allows for free WiFi connection along the so-called "Camino Lebaniego", a part of the Way of Saint James in Cantabria, Northern Spain, and part of UNESCO World Heritage. It is the first "online" pilgrim's route in the world, whose 15 access points along the Way run entirely on solar power, supported by the local energy company Viesgo.

Thanks to the app's innovative features, such as geolocation and calendar functions, pilgrims can also discover important events available in their respective area, find further interesting information, sites to visit, alternative routes, things to do or places to rest and eat. All access spots are conveniently located next to a church, pilgrim's accommodation, or public squares. Users of the "Camino Lebaniego Digital" can plan their pilgrimage route according to their personal tastes or events available along the Way.

Main users of "Camino Lebaniego Digital"

People from Cantabria (34%) and Madrid (17%) are the main users of this mobile app, which has also been downloaded by people from Castilla y Leon (8%), Basque Country (6,6%), Andalusia (5,5%) or Catalonia (3,3%). Other users are pilgrims from other Spanish provinces, and also pilgrims from foreign countries, such as Great Britain, Denmark, France, Poland, Italy and Germany. Other markets are China, Australia, the Philippines, Japan and the USA.
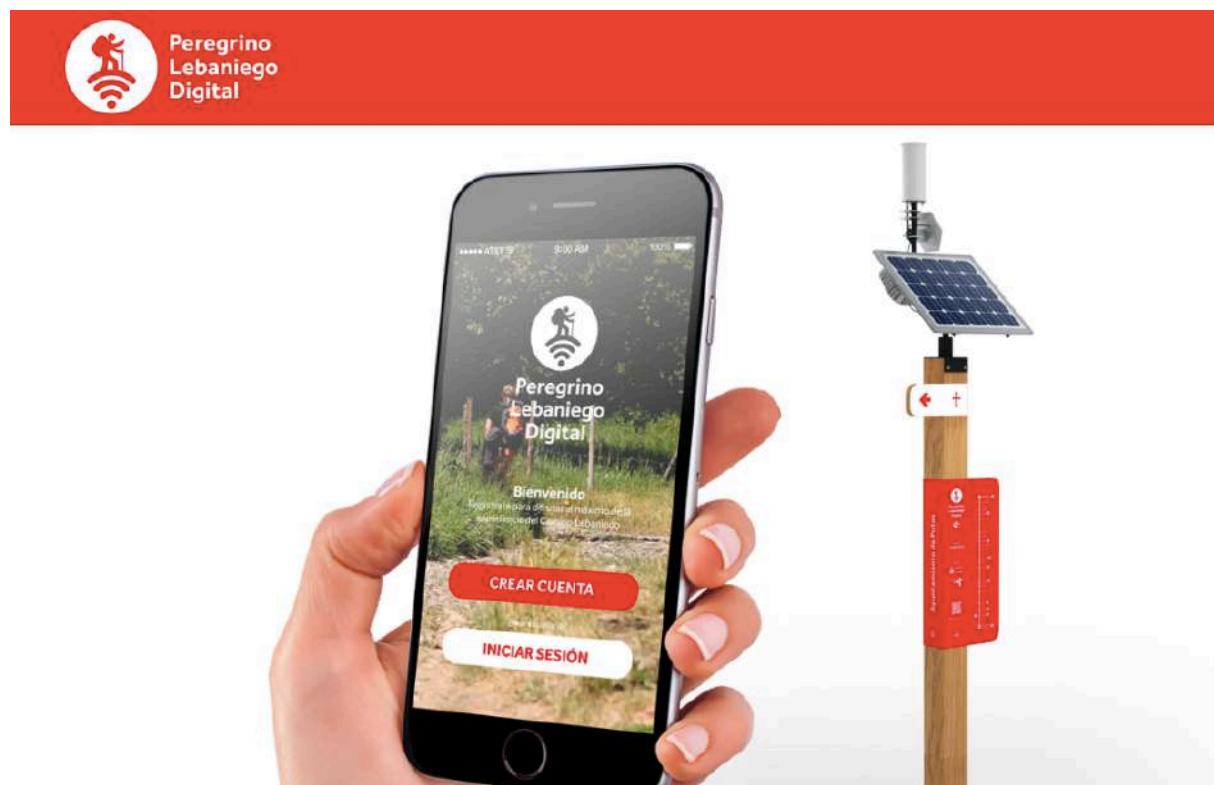
Screenshot of the "Camino Lebaniego Digital" pilgrim app © Elena Paschinger

Further innovation for the future

Currently, one of the main fields of development is the so-called "Lebaniego Digital Credential". The application will thereby allow for the possibility to stamp each stage along the way up to Santo Toribio's Monastery, and to earn the jubilee just by passing by the 15 access points of the network "Camino Lebaniego Digital". This innovative digital solution may therefore be used instead of the traditional paper stamp – a world first in terms of innovative pilgrimage developments!

Thanks to this connectivity, the eleven municipalities involved in the project have the opportunity to renew their management aspects of the local area artistic, historic, natural and ethnographic resources. This is a considerable help to promote the development of rural areas thanks to sustainability, and technological innovation.

Further information can be found here: https://peregrinolebaniegodigital.com.

Marche Region in Italy

The official website www.turismo.marche.it is available in ten different languages.[1] The website is characterised by six different themes, or clusters (Marche in blue, Rolling hills and ancient villages, The genius of Marche, Spirituality and meditation, Parks and active nature, Made in Marche) and other, "smaller" travel themes such as family, business, etc. The website also contains a section dedicated to local operators in the tourism sector. The operators who subscribed to the official database of Le Marche Region can directly publish their offers on the website, such as holiday packages or special holiday offers.

In accordance with the above-mentioned main clusters, there is a section of the website to download six free mobile applications. They are easy to use and full of interesting information for users, such as maps, itineraries and suggestions, which can be used offline (without connection to the Internet).

The website www.eventi.marche.it is dedicated to all the events taking place in Le Marche, presently only available in Italian language. Tourists can plan their holidays in Marche with Marche Advisor, an online tool to create tailor-made itineraries through the region. Users have to answer three simple questions: when, where and what (interests) to automatically create a range of possible itineraries according to the interests indicated.

Typical crafts activities in Marche region, Provincia di Ascoli, Piceno © Social Media Team Marche

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[1] All of this information has been provided by Ruth Mezzolani, who is part of the Social Media Team in the Italian Marche region, managing the online activities and accounts on behalf of Marche Region.

Social Media Strategy

The Social Media Team of Fondazione Marche Cultura was founded in 2012 and is composed by five members, each one taking care about specific tasks:

- Social Media Manager in charge of strategy, account, management and control;
- Social Media Specialists in charge of the editorial unit (content, programming), the computer unit (SEO, SEM, indexing and optimization) and the creative unit (image search, graphics, electronic filing).

The Social Media Team manages more than 20 activities on ten different social networks and two blogs (www.destinazionemarche.it – culturamarchelab.regione.marche.it), totalling 400.000 followers on five different continents and millions of users reached.

Moreover, the Social Media team is strongly committed to spreading digital literacy and promoting digital literacy trainings all over the region through seminars, workshops and meetings, to build a digital network able to increase the value of the territory in a correct and adequate way. In addition to the online activities, the team supports Marche Region during fairs, events, exhibitions, meetings and any other activity requested.

The main online activities and accounts managed are:

Facebook fan page in Italian Marche Tourism;
Facebook fan page in English Marche Tourism_EN;
Facebook fan page in German Marche Tourism_DE;
Twitter account in Italian @marchetourism;
Twitter account in English @marchetourismen;
Instagram account @marchetourism;
Brochures about Marche Region on Issuu;
Marche videos on the Youtube channel;
Thousands of pictures on Flickr and Pinterest accounts; as well as Google+ .

More online & offline projects

- #marcheglass

"Marche Glass" is a project promoted by Fondazione Marche Cultura and the Social Media Team Marche in 2014. After an online call for young video-makers and designers to create a new video to promote Marche Region, #marcheglass has been chosen among other ideas because it was considered the right product for a social campaign. A few months after the launch, more than 919.000 people had been reached, producing 618.000 visualizations and more than 18.000 shares on Facebook accumulated in total. For more information, please refer to the promotional video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N1aGoukUTo.

- Photowalks

What is a photowalk?
1. A walk with friends who love photography;
2. A way to connect the offline with the online;
3. An editorial project.

In brief: It is a complex editorial project, which aims at involving a large public through online and offline activities. The first step in this project was choosing destinations according to the ability to organise an exclusive but repeatable tour (experiential tourism) with:

- Professional guides;
- Welcoming organised plan;
- Promotional material;
- Experiential activities;
- Easy access to internet connection;
- High engagement of local tourism.

A photo walk involving women net making in San Benedetto del Tronto, taking place in Marche region in Italy © Social Media Team Marche

The second step was about defining the editorial plan, which is composed by:

- Tailor-made graphics;
- Institutional and promotional pre-event communication (press releases, web and social marketing, Facebook cover, Map and info Facebook posts);
- Direct contact with followers and influencer;
- Local prizes though a photo contest;

- Photowalk – half a day, usually Sunday morning, touring the city (main point of interests, experiences, free local food and wine tasting);
- Post-event communications (institutional and social);
- Selection of the pictures for the contest by the Social Media team and local subjects;
- Prize-giving ceremony;
- Exhibition.

The main goals behind these activities were:

- Increasing the destination's web reputation;
- Sharing the experience with digital tools creating a new awareness for touristic purposes;
- Creating a local network of private and public subjects;
- Discovering new ways of welcoming and creating unique experiences which tourists can remember and share;
- Generating new followers for the online activities of the destination;
- Promoting the idea of "active tourism".

2015 photowalks have produced more than 38 million impressions, 2016 more than 147 millions!

Kreativ Reisen Österreich – Creative Tourism Austria

Kreativ Reisen Österreich – Creative Tourism Austria has been founded in 2011 as an association to promote and highlight the creative tourism offers across all of Austria's nine provinces. It works in close cooperation with the Austrian National Tourist Office, particularly with regards to Social Media Marketing, networking and cooperation.

The website www.kreativreisen.at matches an increasingly mobile user database, and continues propagating newsletter & Social Media marketing:
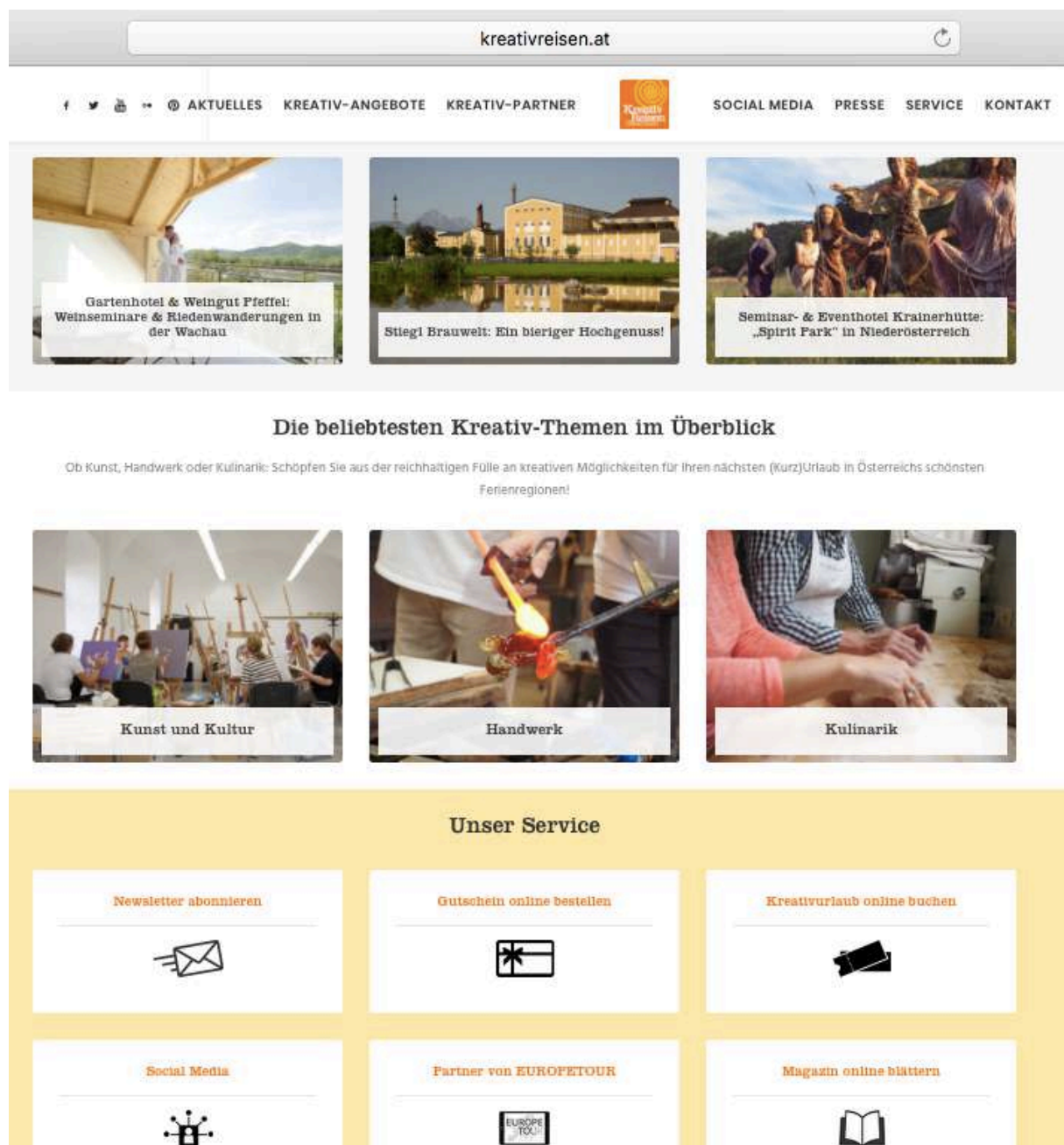
Screenshot of the "Kreativ Reisen Österreich – Creative Tourism Austria" homepage © Elena Paschinger

Given its market focus on the German-speaking areas of Europe, an English translation has yet to be added. From the beginning, the association "Kreativ Reisen Österreich" has been innovative in managing a notable number of successful (Social Media) cooperation initiatives, notably:

Social Media Strategy

Every week, several updates are published on www.facebook.com/kreativreisen, using the growing Facebook community to highlight members' offers and interesting national or international events. In addition, Pinterest, Twitter, Flickr and other Social Media channels are used, though Facebook does remain the primary channel for community building among Austrian, and German audiences. The latter is primarily interesting for SEO (Search Engine Optimization), as well as campaign building around prize draws, annual events, or member workshops.

Blog Trips

Every year, at least once or twice, media conferences, press or blog trips are organized for journalists and digital influencers wishing to get experience Creative Tourism in Austria. Funding is covered by participating institutions, as well as local and regional tourism boards, with the management team providing the expertise and contacts. These trips have been very successful over the years, and follow the hashtag #KreativReisen #CreativeTravel #inAustria (the latter also advocated by the Austrian National Tourism Board). Some of those results, including videos and storytelling done by the bloggers, can be seen here: www.kreativreisen.at/social-media.

International Travel Bloggers gather at a creative cooking event in Salzburg © Elena Paschinger

Instagram Takeover with @VisitAustria

Thanks to its proven partnership with the Austrian National Tourism Board, "Kreativ Reisen Österreich – Creative Tourism Austria" has taken over the national tourism board's Instagram account (www.instagram.com/visitaustria, at well over 141.000 followers in September 2017) on two occasions in the spring of 2017: Covering the "Wein.Firn.Genuss" event in the mountains of Pitztal, Tirol as well as the "Aufrettern" Styrian Spring Festival. This was done by publishing "stories", live short videos limited to ten seconds each, including tagging similar accounts, events or participants in the story. It has provided a huge reach upon each publication, averaging between 10.000 – 15.000 views, as well as hundreds of comments over the campaign's life span of two weekends.

Exercise:

Out of all the above Best Practice Examples presented above, which one appeals to you most, and why? Which elements are most suitable for your business: What are you able to implement right away, and where do you still need help in order to reach your market?

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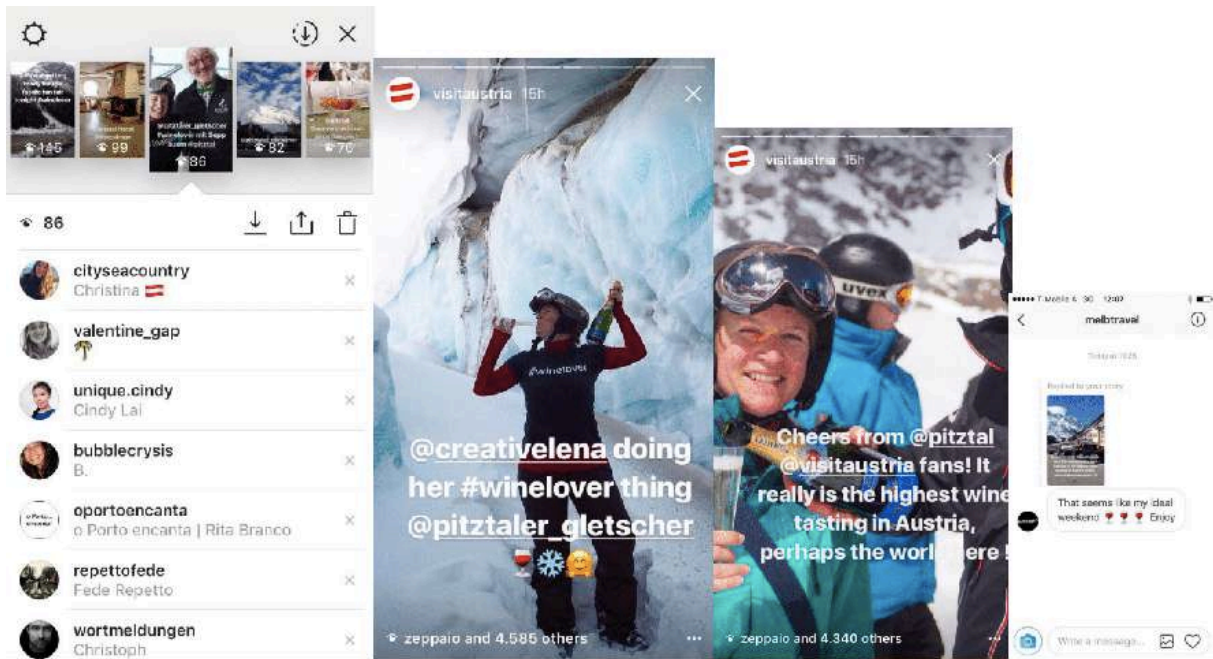
Further Reading

Books, brochures & articles

- Klein, Armin, Pröbstle, Yvonne, Schmidt-Ott, Thomas (Hg.): „Kulturtourismus für alle? Neue Strategien für einen Wachstumsmarkt, 2017 (German publication on new strategies for the growing market of cultural tourism)
- Paschinger, Elena: „The Creative Traveler's Handbook", Full Flight Press, 2015, giving practical, hands-on tips and advice for creative travellers worldwide (available on Amazon)
- Drda-Kühn, Karin: "Take it or Leave it? Expectations, frustrations and gratifications of visitors at religious heritage sites", in: MM Nieuws, Dossier „Religious Heritage and Tourism", 12/2016, www.mmnieuws.nl (The article focuses on the expectations of visitors at religious heritage sites and gives recommendations how to adapt to visitors' needs there.)
- Drda-Kühn, Karin: "Kulturtourismus – Für den ländlichen Raum noch zu entdecken", in: Zukunftsinitiative Rheinland-Pfalz (ZIRP) und Troeger-Weiß, Gabi (Hrsg): "Starke Wirtschaft – Starke Regionen. Gute Aussichten für das Land", Mainz 2015 (The article shows the potential of cultural tourism in rural areas. The whole book (in German only) can be ordered by E-MaiL.)
- Social Media Guideline – Ein Leitfaden zum Umgang mit Social Media für touristische Partner in Rheinland-Pfalz, 2014
- Drda-Kühn, Karin / Grönwaldt, Pirka Kathrin: "Kulturtourismus und Soziale Medien – Leitfaden für Kommunen", Bad Mergentheim 2013, ISBN 978-3-00-04454-7 (a German Social Media Guide on cultural tourism for municipalities in rural areas: kultur-und-arbeit.de/veroeffentlichungen/broschueren)
- Drda-Kühn, Karin: „Regionalentwicklung und Kulturtourismus: ökonomisches Potenzial (kultur-)touristischer Netzwerke für strukturschwache Räume", in: Buschmann, Lara, Kolbitz, Lina Lisa (Hrsg.): „Kulturtourismus im ländlichen Raum", Begleitpublikation zum 1. Symposium im KLOSTERLAND, veranstaltet durch KLOSTERLAND | Deutsch-Polnisches Klosternetzwerk, Berlin 03/2013; (a German article on regional development and cultural tourisms in low density areas) . Download: www.klosterland.de/Mediencenter
- Drda-Kühn, Karin / Marschall, Alexander: „Mut zum Experiment – soziale Netzwerke als Chance für den Kulturtourismus im ländlichen Raum", in: Christian Holst, Karin Janner, Axel Kopp: „Social Media im Kulturmanagement", Frechen 2011, S.303-311, ISBN 978-3-8266-9110-2 (a German publication on Social Media in cultural management including cultural tourism)

Weblinks

You may find constantly updated links to Social Media marketing, and associated topics, on the EUROPETOUR website www.europetour.tips, as well as on the "Resources" page of this compendium (see page 53).

The EUROPETOUR Partnership: Empowering Rural Areas to Harvest the Potential of Cultural Tourism

EUROPETOUR is an Erasmus+ project aimed at empowering rural areas to harvest the potential of cultural tourism by making better business decisions in the context of an increasingly competitive, global, and mature market. The latter especially refers to the fact that travellers, i.e. consumers of cultural tourism products and services, are more and more destination-savvy, i.e. are very well-informed and come with high product / experience expectations. Failure to meet said demands or expectations will result in a loss of market share. Therefore, it is necessary to familiarize yourself with the most important tools in Social Media management, cooperating with digital influencers, and marketing yourself and your business online.

The EUROPETOUR homepage www.europetour.tips provides you with an inspiring blog on cultural tourism topics, data and analyses, training material and training events in seven European countries.

EMPOWERING RURAL AREAS TO HARVEST THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL TOURISM. A EUROPEAN INITIATIVE AIMED AT UNLOCKING THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF EUROPE'S OUTSTANDING CULTURAL TREASURES.

Screenshot of the "EUROPETOUR" homepage © Elena Paschinger

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Online Resources

- CULTUREWB culturwb.pmf.uns.ac.rs/wb-cultural-tourism/
  CULTURWB targets the need to **strengthen the cultural tourism industry** development in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, to **create and improve strategies for development of cultural tourism** in these countries, address its importance and raise awareness of its pivotal role in safeguarding the rich cultural heritage in the region and beyond.

- The **Social Travel Summit & Think Tank Reports** thesocialtravelsummit.com
  The Social Travel Summit, an annual conference event, is where the world's leading online travel influencers and travel-industry decision makers meet to share, learn and develop best practices and collaborative success in travel marketing and publishing.

- VECTOR www.vector-tourism.net
  VECTOR had the mission to define a **professional profile of a "Destination Manager" (DM)** who is capable of proposing strategies aiming at **managing, enhancing and promoting destinations in an integrated perspective**. By using the approach of creating an OER (Open Educational Resource) and of implementing a complete DM training curriculum evaluated and recognized through the ECVET system, VECTOR project aimed at having both a short term and a medium/long term impact. In this sense, the project aimed at defining a highly skilled professional profile of a so-called Destination Manager. A profile that is capable of proposing strategies aiming at managing, enhancing and promoting tourist destinations in an integrated perspective. Secondly, to develop a joint training curriculum, defining the minimum requirements of the course in accordance with the ECVET standards (learning outcomes, units of learning outcomes approach, etc.) in order to decrease the shortage of qualified professionals in the tourism sector.

Global Web Resources:

- Creative Tourism Network: www.creativetourismnetwork.org
- Creative Tourism Austria www.kreativreisen.at/en
- Barcelona Creative Tourism www.barcelonacreativa.info
- Barcelona Cooking www.barcelonacooking.net

Further Relational Travel Websites (with a further focus on cultural tourism)

- Couchsurfing www.couchsurfing.org
- AirBnB www.airbnb.com
- Tripadvisor www.tripadvisor.com
- Eat With A Local www.EatWithALocal.com
- Cookening www.cookening.com

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[3] Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V. (DZT): „Qualitätsmonitor Deutschland Tourismus", Results 2011/2012 (last survey)

[4] See http://www.europetour.tips/results/the-europetour-survey as of May 18th, 2017

[5] See the German study on cultural tourism of 2016, which gives a much more differentiated picture: http://www.kulturtourismusstudie.de

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[14] The "2014 Expedia/Egencia Mobile Index" examines how mobile devices impact travel; see viewfinder.expedia.com/news/2014-expedia-egencia-mobile-index/

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