

MOBILE APPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM

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Abstract: - Tourism industry has always been one of the most adaptable sectors, following the trends imposed by the two above- mentioned industries. The increase in tourists' mobility, users of mobile devices, also made necessary the adaptation of the distribution of tourism products and services and their redirecting towards the mobile environment. Taking into account these aspects, the present study was conceived on two levels. The first level identifies important aspects of mobile applications in general, by types and classifications, as well as presents a concise static image of them at global level. It also describes aspects related to mobile applications dedicated to tourism as offers to mobile device users. The second level comprises the study regarding the usage of tourism-specific mobile applications by Indian mobile device users. The use of mobile devices has many purposes, including commerce, entertainment and education. Some of these applications deliver information about a city or region. Since these devices are portable and can deliver information where there is internet access, a new potential use is in travels.

Keywords: *Mobile Apps, Tourism, Mobile Tourism, Mobile Devices, Mobile Users*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism, one of the most flexible and adaptable industries, was among the [14] first adopters of all novelties developed by ICT and mobile technology industry, thus permanently updating touristic service offers according to customers' needs. The evolution history of tourism industry delineates the gradual progress made by [2] touristic entities, as they shifted from the traditional offline environment to the digital environment first employed in e-tourism and subsequently in mobile-tourism. The [1] tourism industry has continuously undergone fast transformations brought about by mobile technologies and ICT industry, as they have changed tourists' consumption behavior and the way they access and [11] use information specific to this sector. The increased mobility of tourists, who have become technology and mobile device consumers, has imposed the reconfiguration of tourism product and service distribution, in terms of their transmutation to the mobile environment. Travel & tourism industry is no such exception since a huge part of its success relies on these mobile apps. The days of paper maps, guidebooks, and other stuff are gone and

replaced by interactive & [9] amazing mobile apps for travel & tourism industry that come with many functionalities. Travel application development has become a one-stop solution for its users as you don't have to [8] have different portals for car rentals, ticket booking, insurance, travel related shopping etc. You get everything related to travelling at a single place.

2. Literature review

Mobile applications, frequently referred to as apps, are a type of software application explicitly developed to run on a mobile device such as smartphones or tablets (Technopedia, n.d.). Traditionally, mobile apps often reflect similar services as the ones provided on a PC. However, some of the most successful apps are rather built on the concept of making use of the unique features of mobile devices. Today, mobile devices share a number of powerful characteristics such as big displays, Internet access, context-relevant push notifications, location tracking functionality (Want, 2009) and health tracking that enable consumers to enhance their every day activities. Outstanding examples of such companies range from mobile messaging apps such as What's App to last-minute booking

apps like HotelTonight and locationbased services like Google Maps, all of which share the concept of "mobile first" meaning that the product was specifically designed for mobile usage. the concept of smartphone and applications for mobile phones are defined. This section also includes the existing mobile applications for smartphones, the consumer profile of smartphone users, type and profile of tourist who are using mobile services for tourism, the stages of travel and the usage of mobile applications.

3. BENEFITS OF MOBILE APPS

FOR THE TRAVEL TOURISM INDUSTRY

In today's digitized world travel and tourism sectors are also upgrading their business with latest digital technology. The Travel and [13] Tourism have grown by leaps and bounds in the past few decades. This increase has been brought by various factors, the most important one [10] is digitization. Digitization has delivered new level of travel experience. This is not just for the purpose of traveling for holidays but also for business tourism. It is become much easier with the use of the various mobile apps of tourism that allows the user to prepare everything before he/she arrives at the destination.

This ease of traveling has [12] enhanced the inflow of tourists and travelers. According to a survey conducted by eMarketer, tourism app was listed among the top 10 most downloaded mobile apps across the world. According to recent survey tourism has been greatly increased in the last 1 decade and with increasing technology and awareness, 70% of tourist [7,6] are using mobile app for travelling and bookings. Let us look at some of the most common features of a tourism mobile app.

a. Details of the locales

Most tourism apps offer details of the tourist locations which include a detailed write-up about the locality along with details of the weather, people, tourist attractions and [4] the best time to visit. Numerous photos of the landscapes, market, monuments and the people are available. This feature actually helps the user to guide about [5] his/her plans of choosing the best location. Hence it

is a good idea to have a good store of images to showcase the location.

b. Booking

The user has an option to select his/her mode of transport, is it flight, buses, trains or other passenger vehicles. As technology is upgrading so [3] it allows user to pay the charge using integrate payment methods in application. This feature also allows you to book your accommodation from a list of the hotels, resorts, and home stays. So that you can easily book it as per your budget and needs. One important thing about mobile app booking feature is, it must be very easy to use. If users will find it difficult to use, then you won't get bookings instead your app will be uninstalled.

c. Live tracking

This feature uses the GPS tracker to keep a track of location of bus or train allowing the users to know exactly, how far they are from their destination. This feature is also helpful in keeping track of the traffic to check how long it will take to reach the pickup point. Moreover, live tracking is particularly helpful for parents to keep a track on the vehicle if their children are traveling.

d. Digital wallet

The additional feature facilitating payments digitally allows for an easy mode of transaction and ensures a safe travel. Users can shop and make their payment using digital modes of payment they can make payments for reservations of hotels and travels online.

Tourists prefer to pay online. So, if your mobile app having feature of online payment it will give rich experience to your customers. Online payment is not only time saving, but it's also very secure.

e. Social traveling

This is a new trend that is catching on, it allows the traveler to share plans of travel with another traveler having similar travel interest. This not only provides the traveler a travel buddy but also allows sharing the travel cost making it a much economic way to travel. This feature can also connect the traveler with the local users of the app so that they can have an enhanced experience of the visit. This feature

also allows the user to connect with friends and view suggestions from other users.

4. NEED FOR MOBILE APP FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Now, the world is at the fingertips of mobile users. Mobile users are now getting real-time information which they need anytime, anywhere. More than 150 million travelers who have smartphones prefer apps for hotel room booking, and flight booking, etc. Among tour operators and tourists, *Mobile App for Travel industry* brings happiness with multi-benefits.

How Travel Technology Enhance Travel Business?

1. **Automation:** With all the information instantly available, people can look up for exactly what they want without having to talk to some executive or going around in circles. As per business perspective, all the operations – information, bookings, invoicing, billing, and every other thing – is automated leading for saving time and efforts.
2. **Collaboration:** Travel technology collaborates your business with almost every leading transportation service provider – air, rail, sea or land.
3. **Security:** Travel technology keeps into account all those measures and implementations that make a Travel Portal safe and secure for both clients and business owners, keeping all your and clients' information and details safe and sound.
4. **Excellent CMS:** Technology advancements make businesses more capable of managing and maintaining all the content on the website and keeping a track and record of clients' interests and bookings in the most effective style.
5. **One Stop Solution:** Anything and everything can be housed and provided by a single Travel Portal – ticket booking, hotel booking, car rentals, sightseeing, insurance, and even travel related shopping. You don't necessarily have to have different portals for all of them. In fact, people prefer each and everything at a single place.

Some Interesting Facts of Travel & Tourism Industry Apps

- 85% use smartphones to plan their travel when on leisure tours
- 30% use mobile apps to find the best hotel and flight deals
- 15% use download travel apps to plan a trip ahead
- Travel & Tourism related apps rank as the 7th most downloaded category of apps
- 15% downloaded mobile apps specifically for the upcoming vacations/holidays

Which functions should have in a travel app?

There are a lot of positive changes along with the appearance of mobile application in travel and tourism business, so do you know about the trends of travel mobile application nowadays.

1. Information channel

One of the advantages of tourism mobile application is reducing the paperwork that end users have to bring along with their trip, it means that this function plays an important role in customers' decision to download a mobile application. To be called an all-in-one application, it has to include all the standard data like phone number, website, hotel address, tourist suggested plan. This information also needs to be continuously updated to make sure customers always receive the newest one.

2. Location checking and advertising

Mobile application function may allow a business owner to attract more customers. By detecting a smartphone location, advertising can easily target the right customers, especially in the tourist area.

3. Offline content

Even in the 4.0 technology industry, some famous places still don't connect to the internet or stop the connection of tourist. Therefore, it should be more convenient to check content information offline. Also, this is a good way to convince customers to stop using the internet and enjoy their vacation.

4. Multi-languages

Travelling is global activities which attracts and cover foreign markets. Even English can be

considered as a global language, tourists still prefer to use their national language which can help them understand more about the new culture, country and the place where they visit.

5. Event Calendar

The calendar only always exists in every mobile phone. However, the event calendar, which includes all the schedule and information of events, will help tourist have more idea to travel around and enjoy local events as well as boost travelling business.

6. Currency value converter function

Normally, foreign travelers have to exchange local money to spend in a foreign country. However, not all people know about the exchange rate, and then the currency converter functions will show its convenience to its owner.

7. Map and GPS

In the new place, the demand for finding the way, searching the map to get the guideline to their destination. By mapping and GPS function, the app can quickly suggest end-users how to arrive at the destination in the shortest way.

5. DISADVANTAGES OF TRAVEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY APPS

1. The high cost of developing an app.

Mobile apps take more time and money to develop than a website. For starters, you need to have at least two versions developed—one for iOS and one for Android. Then you also have to take into account that you may need to hire a separate team to have the app developed since web development is different from app development.

2. The complex app development process.

The kind of OS—whether iOS or Android—isn't the only thing that developers have to consider when having an app made. Developers also have to account for different screen sizes across devices for both platforms. And it gets more complicated for Android app development since there are many versions of Android currently out on the market.

3. Complex maintenance.

It's not done even when the app has been launched in the app store. Mobile apps require a long-term investment due to the need for updates, especially critical ones such as repairing security vulnerabilities or to ensure compliance with new iOS or Android releases.

4. Profit-sharing with the app store.

If you are considering using your app to drive revenue, either through paid downloads of the app itself or via the purchase of services through the app, then be aware that app stores get a substantial cut of the pie.

5. Additional requirements for marketing.

You will still need to promote it so that your previous customers and the general public can download the app.

You may need to update your marketing collaterals online and in print. Some businesses even create on-ground events revolving around the launch of an app. And the standard SEO for websites would not work for an app.

You may need to think about app store optimization with a whole new set of tools that you can use to promote your app.

6. Challenges in tracking and fetching data.

The same security that an app may provide regarding a consumer's data can be a challenge for businesses as well. For starters, fetching data from the app to track metrics and get data is a different matter.

Then you would also have to set up a different set of goals, events, etc. While in the long run all these data are beneficial, it does require a lot of time and effort to set up.

7. Customer impatience.

Mobile apps may offer an engaging user experience for customers, but in turn customers end up expecting more from any app out in the market.

6. CONCLUSION

So, we have seen that the tourism is increasing tremendously worldwide. Tourists are also loving and demanding advance technology. A travel agency must need a mobile app if it wants to stay in this competitive market. Either they should hire in-house staff for tourism app design, development and marketing or hire a mobile app development company with similar experience to make their app successful on the internet.

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