The Changing Face of Tourism
Making Connections Through Technological Advancement

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The Importance of Tourism

Local and international travel in the U.S. accounts generates:

- $500 billion direct revenue
- $100 billion in taxes
- 5.7 million jobs

In the U.S., this equates to $1,147 less taxes per person.

A New Kind of Tourist

Young people (born 1980-1999) are the fastest growing traveler demographic.

- 190 million trips taken in 2010
- 300 million trips projects for 2020

Young travelers are looking for:
- Instantaneity
- Flexibility
- Connection

A New Kind of Tourist: Instantaneity

Older travelers generally book within a 92-day window.

Young travelers generally book within a 72-day window.

A New Kind of Tourist: Flexibility

19% of older generations prefer an automated hotel check-in.

36% of young travelers prefer it.

A New Kind of Tourist: Connection

78% of young traveler want to learn something while traveling.

70% expect special places to offer immersive experiences that are interactive and hands-on.

“New tourists … [display] respect for the culture of host nations and [look] to experience and learn rather than merely stand back and gaze.”

—Ștânciulescu, Molnar & Bunghez

What Constitutes Sustainable Travel?

Cultural Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability

Economic Sustainability
Cultural Sustainability

Host communities need agency in directing and curating cultural experiences.

Host community agency help maintain “authenticity” and prevent cultural damage.

Environmental Sustainability

Natural environments are important for:

• Drawing tourists
• Biodiversity

To preserve these resources, host communities need support in enacting ecologically sound tourism practices.

Economic Sustainability

Local knowledge of cultural and environmental treasures can help grow the tourism industry and the local economy.

“Contemporary models of ecotourism ... [can increase] the levels of institutional and symbolic empowerment by recognizing the efficiency of indigenous cultural knowledge...” —Robinson & Picard

Current State of the Industry

- Tourists
- Local Knowledge
- Scenic Beauty
- Small Business
- Cultural Uniqueness
Bridging the Gap: Technology

- 64% of American adults own a smartphone, with especially high ownership among young people.

- 67% of smartphone users use their phone to share pictures, video, or commentary about events in their community.

- 56% of smartphone users use their phone to learn about events.

Bridging the Gap: Social Media

Young people check 10.2 sources before booking, including review sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp.

“Twitter and Facebook status are an integral component in the lives of [young people] who regularly uploaded photographs on Instagram so they may share their new in real-time with friends and colleagues.” —Lee

Rika Global Connectivity Model
Rika Model: Cultural Sustainability

Empower local communities to share their own culture.

- Locals have the greatest knowledge of their own culture.
- Locals are less likely to damage their culture through unintentional disrespect.

“…Dialogue is a key part of the process of creating conditions for mutual understanding … and of preventing cultural prejudice.”
—Robinson & Picard

Rika Model: Environmental Sustainability

Empower local communities to share their natural scenic beauty.

• Locals have the best knowledge of areas of outstanding natural beauty.
• Locals are incentivized to maintain their environment with practices and laws that support biodiversity.
Empowering local communities provides economic opportunity that in turn supports the local culture and environment that drew tourists in the first place.

Using technology to connect tourists with local “experts” offers better opportunities for both communities and travelers.
Thank you!