
The economic value of ‘immateriality’

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Abstract: There is no structured and systematic approach to opportunities stemming from innovation in the field of cultural tourism. This consideration represents the starting point of the ‘Experience Roma’ initiative presented in this essay. This project is a joint effort between the local government authorities as well as the cultural organisations and institutions in Rome, Italy. Among the project’s objectives are to place Rome at the centre of innovation in terms of cultural tourism, to create a project-oriented approach to deliverables that can be easily replicated in other ‘art cities’ so as to build, develop, and disseminate an “Italian approach to cultural tourism management”.

Keywords: tourism; technology; experience Roma.

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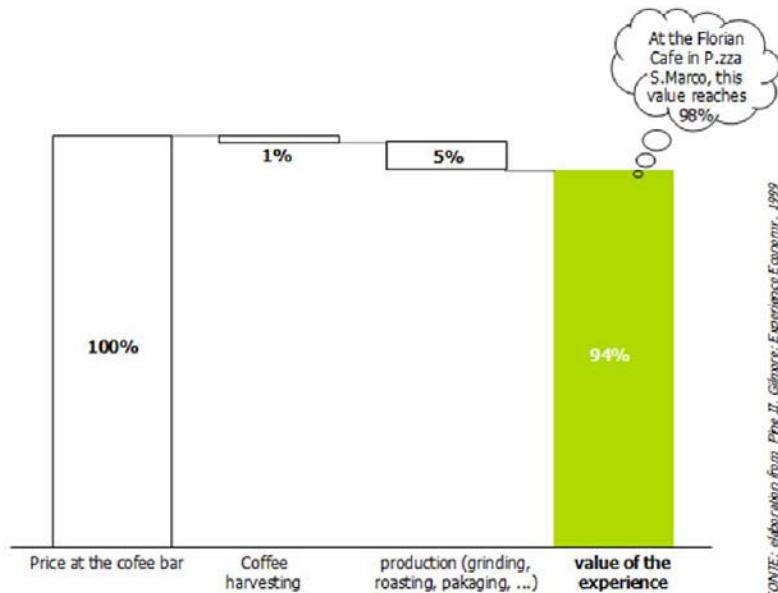
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1 Introduction: tourism and innovation

Is it possible to imagine an economy based on services rather than on product? And is it possible to believe it capable of generating similar – if not higher – revenue? Are services really destined to play a secondary role, and who can we blame for it: the poor quality of public services, or the lack of proper demand? First of all: services may generate revenue. Nowadays, services are used to add value to existing products and thereby to justify an enhanced price. In *Experience Economy*, Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore have analysed the value chain of coffee, to prove that the value of service (as drinking your coffee in an historical place on San Marco square in Venice, one of the most beautiful cities in the world) enables the creation of the real value of a commodity – in our case, to raise the price from 20 cents to 15 dollars. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1 Experience-based economy: experience as a value driver (see online version for colours)



Although the product is still important, it can be seen as a catalyst, an opportunity to offer a service. Potential innovation in the product 'coffee' (from enhancing the quality to innovative packaging, to efficient distribution) may contribute, but only marginally, to the definition of product value. What really makes the difference is how the product is perceived. And that is when services may prove more effective.

Tourism is a new frontier. In tourism the assumption is that the experience and perceived commodity value are even more suitable when considering the case of experiential tourism vs. object-based tourism: cultural tourists are increasingly seeking experiences rather than objects. Much of this trend is related to an increasing propensity for tourists to seek experiences that are subjective or meaningful to them personally (as opposed to the intrinsic destination or objective significance). Attractions associated with memories, nostalgia, total immersion experience, for instance, are better positioned to take advantage of this trend. Those that are seemingly less well positioned can provide innovative, interactive programming to deliver the types of experiences sought by visitors. This trend is reflected in the increasing popularity of food and themed shopping experiences, interactive museum programmes and exhibits, and immersive environments and ‘high-tech’ presentation technologies, such as large-format theatres. Not only these are types of experiences more fun for the visitor but also, each promotes affective learning – learning that sparks an interest in visitors and encourages them to develop that interest after leaving the attraction.

It is necessary to orient the design of products toward the planning of experiences, aiming at innovation that is not pure technology, and therefore on suitable for machines, but a solution conceived for the man and the environment in which he lives. A country, for example, can become a testing area for technologies, processes and the most innovative marketing approaches, thus regaining the economic centrality that the industrial economy before, and the new economy later, have denied it.

In the last 50 years, the experts of the US urban society believed that cities had entered into an inexorable phase of decline; to quote George Gilder “Large cities are the forgotten legacy of the industrial era”. On the other hand, the scenario planner of the New Economy retained that in a highly technological period “geography was dead” and the place where individuals worked was no longer important. This is not true: the territory is rather resuming a central role in the economy. It attracts talents: ‘beautiful places’ go back to their traditional role as generators of economic value. It multiplies the objects it contains:

“Our most invaluable cultural heritage is the framework, the continuum linking monuments, cities and individuals; the framework includes not only museums and monuments, but also the culture of conservation that have allowed them to survive up to our time.”

The territory, moreover, is a form of intellectual protection: it gives its products a historic connotation, a specific difference, the feeling that they cannot be easily imitated from outside.

For the full valorisation of the territory there are two levers: the first one is the innovation. There are different areas wherein innovation can be useful but maybe the new digital technologies represent the area that would give huge economical returns sooner. There are a lot of possibilities, but three are particularly interesting and need to be carefully considered. These are navigable satellite maps, web TV, and print-on-demand.

Aside from being an effective instrument for the presentation of geographically referred data, navigable satellite maps are real system for the multi-layer representation of complex data. web TV provides the possibility to spread on the internet audio-visual television-like contents. Print-on-demand allows the printing of ‘unique’, books at a very low price and enables personalisation of tourist guides and travel experiences.

A second lever for the full valorisation of the territory is education. Today we need specialists with expertise capable of ‘projecting’ the overall experience of tourists. What are some of the abilities that the experience manager needs to have? First of all, she/he must know business planning and marketing strategies, as well as art history and interior design. She or he has to be skilful in human sciences and in communication sciences. Lastly, she or he has to know new technologies and their opportunities well.

The most proper approach to valorisation considers Cultural Heritage not as a simple entity, but as an important instrument capable of attracting tourist flows on a specific territory. Cultural Heritage can generate revenues itself (for instance, thanks to the museum tickets) but mainly it allows for building an integrated offer including cultural, tourist, wine and food, and handicraft items.

Governments need to develop the consciousness that Cultural Heritage has an extraordinary attraction power. They must learn how to build a mechanism (known as ‘meaning circuit’) that gives meaning to the Cultural Heritage experience and evaluate its connection with the territory and its history. Fundamental for the empowerment of a tourist offer is a deeper comprehension of the tourist and of the reasons that push him to travel: the significance of the travel planning, the deep psychological mechanisms connected with travelling, the travel as a metaphor during which he discovers new places and understands more about himself.

A useful operative concept is the so-called “long run experience” of the visitor. The outstanding item is not only visiting a place but above all, the preparation for the travel and, subsequently, the continuation of the memories and the chance to share them with others. The “long run experience” widens the tourist’s field of experience, underlining the importance of the internet in acquiring information and carrying out travel simulation both in sharing experiences and publishing travel albums.

2 New tourism dynamics

Tourism is one of the world’s largest industries with an estimated US\$ 3 trillion in annual revenues. The industry is expanding at an average rate of 4–5% annually. According to the WEF index though,

“Italy, the country with the highest number of World Heritage sites in the world, ranks a mediocre 33rd in the TCI ranking. The country is strongly assessed for its cultural aspects and its very good tourism infrastructure. However, Italy’s T&T competitiveness suffers from several weaknesses that bring the overall rating down. These include policy rules and regulations, where it ranks a dismal 70th – below most European countries because of its very strong foreign ownership restrictions and rules governing FDI. Further, the government is not seen to be prioritizing the sector (ranked 92nd).”

Cultural heritage tourism, grouped as speciality travel, is the most rapidly growing industry sector. Tourism’s growth has generated significant capital, changed regional economies and brought benefits as well as impacts to protected areas and local communities. Cultural sites are prime attractors of tourists, and tourism is a major management concern at the majority of the world’s cultural sites. Cultural tourism is a phenomenon that has gained wide currency in recent decades. A product of demographic, social, and cultural trends, cultural tourism has been identified as a growing and lucrative sector of the tourism industry. Individual organisations and

communities have also embraced cultural tourism as a potential economic saviour; as traditional mass employment industries continue to downsize, cities and towns have turned to cultural tourism as a particularly '21st century' generator of economic activity.

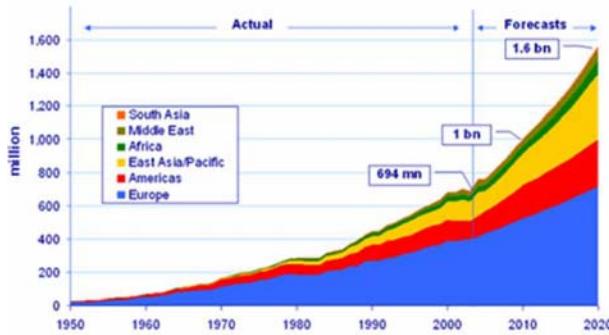
Forecasts by the World Tourism Organization indicate that this trend will continue, and that tourism will grow steadily in the foreseeable future. International arrivals are expected to increase to more than 1 billion in 2010 and reach over 1.5 billion by 2020. These data relate to the whole tourism sector, but tourism in cultural sites is expected to increase at a higher rate. Nevertheless, it may be not wise to foster the increase of arrivals towards a structured lack of consistent policies. The growth of demand for cultural tourism is also supported by the evolution in tourism patterns, which shows a clear tendency toward shorter stays and a fragmentation of holidays. The shortening of vacations leads to increased short visits, focused mainly on urban and cultural tourism. Indeed, cultural tourism attracts an increasingly bigger number of tourists. According to a study by the European Commission, 20% of tourists to Europe respond to cultural motivations, while 60% of European tourists are interested in cultural discovery during their trips.

Besides the continued growth in global tourism demand, both international and domestic, that pervades all types of destinations, including cultural sites, there are other factors that explain this trend, among which we can consider a more sophisticated tourist in search of different cultural backgrounds and expressions; a growing number of local authorities looking at tourism as a source of income and employment opportunities; and a growing awareness among conservation, cultural and natural heritage authorities about the possibilities offered by tourism to generate financial resources.

Tourism can find, in the wide diversity of cultural sites, an endless well of attractions to give to travel and tourism its full meaning: a sense of discovery, cross-cultural understanding and personal enrichment. Cultural tourism activities may encompass many different types of experiences. While many of those can be categorised narrowly to include such activities as visiting historic sites, museums or galleries, and attending performing arts events, they can also include aspects of other streams of tourist activity, such as 'eco-tourism', 'edu-tourism', 'heritage-tourism', 'adventure-tourism'. Indeed, cultural tourism can also include such activities as shopping, dining, and similar means of experiencing a community's culture.

As far as figures are concerned, the latest data on international tourist arrivals to the various destinations in the world collected by the World Tourism Organization showed significant changes in the table of the world's top tourism destinations in recent years. As is shown in Figures 2 and 3, with the strong rebound experienced in 2005–2006, Asian destinations are significantly strengthening their position in the ranking. Although the order of the three main world tourism destinations remained unchanged, with France as unchallenged leader, major developments include China taking over Italy's traditional position as the world's fourth most visited destination.

UNWTO's Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these worldwide arrivals in 2020, 1.2 billion will be intra-regional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers. More specifically, the total tourist arrivals by region shows that by 2020 the top three receiving regions will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and the Pacific (397 million) and the Americas (282 million), followed by Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa which are predicted to record growth at rates of over 5% per year, compared to the world average of 4.1%.

Figure 2 International arrivals in 2020 – forecasts (see online version for colours)

Source: World Tourism Organization

Figure 3 International arrivals by geographic area 1995–2020 – forecasts (see online version for colours)

	Base Year 1995	Forecasts			Market share (%)	Average annual growth rate (%)
		2010	2020	(Million)		
		1995	2020	1995-2020		
World	565	1006	1561	100	100	4.1
Africa	20	47	77	3.6	5.0	5.5
Americas	110	190	282	19.3	18.1	3.8
East Asia and the Pacific	81	195	397	14.4	25.4	6.5
Europe	336	527	717	59.8	45.9	3.1
Middle East	14	36	69	2.2	4.4	6.7
South Asia	4	11	19	0.7	1.2	6.2

Source: World Tourism Organization

The more mature regions Europe and the USA are anticipated to show lower than average growth rates. Europe will maintain the highest share of world arrivals, although there will be a decline from 60% in 1995 to 46% in 2020 (Table 1).

Table 1 Top ten countries in tourist arrival in 2020¹

-
- 1 China
 - 2 USA
 - 3 France
 - 4 Spain
 - 5 Hong Kong
 - 6 Italy
 - 7 Great Britain
 - 8 Mexico
 - 9 Russia
 - 10 Czech Republic
- Total 708.8
-

As seen, Italy may well end up trading its five position to Hong Kong, which is chasing it with motivation and enthusiasm, thanks to an international trend, and specific, strategic policies.

On the other hand, there are several aspects to be considered that may help to fight such a trend for Italy. According to a recent study conducted by IRAT – the Research Institute for the Service Industry that is part of the CNR, in 2005

“demand for tourism in Italy continued to grow, both in terms of arrivals and overnight stays, chalking up a 2.7% growth on the previous year, when 86 million visitors were recorded for a total of 345 million overnight stays, of which about 3 out of 10 were overseas tourists.”

The trend is largely positive: between 2000 and 2004 arrivals went up by 7.4%. If tourist flows are broken down by type of resort, provenance and capacity (hotels and additional facilities) it is significant that some 29 million visitors (or 33.8% of the total) were recorded in towns with historical and artistic attractions.”

Also, the picture painted by the Bit Tourism Award shows that Italy is still very much appreciated, confirming the findings of Klaus Davi & Co. for BitLab 2007, which monitors the country’s visibility as a tourist destination in the international press. A numerical index is calculated on the basis of the number of mentions that the ten top destinations get in a large number of international publications. The index sees

“Italy in pole position with almost 20% of total mentions, with second best, Spain, lagging behind by over 10 points with 9% – unchanged from the previous year. But that’s by no means the whole story. The number of papers devoted to the ‘Belpaese’ shows a remarkable increase of over 51%, from 7101 for the period January ’05 to January ’06, to 10,729 for the period February ’06 to January ’07.”

Italy as a tourist destination has undoubtedly boomed in the new emerging markets, such as India, where Italy was mentioned in the media 182% more times than last year, Russia, up 89%, and China, up 58%, and also in well-established and competing markets, where the media are not always inclined to promote Italy: up 110% in France and up 95% in Spain, for instance. Excellent results were also seen in the USA, UK and the German-speaking area.”

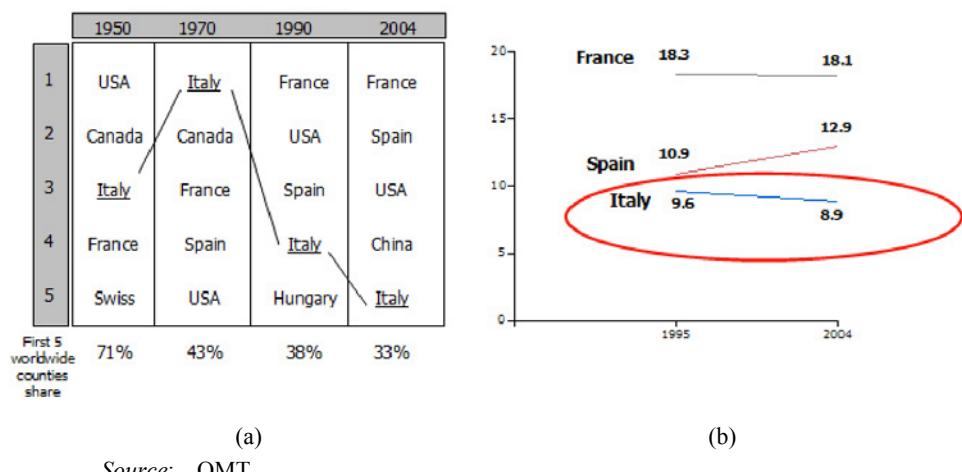
One more reason to speed up all due strategies and catch the wind... (Figure 4)

Some data to think about ...

- Average daily expenditure in 2003: beach €74, (Germans €55, cultural tourists €101 (TCI)).
- A satisfied tourist generates 3–4 new tourists (TCI).
- The hotel infrastructure is underutilised: average use 43%, vs. 59% in France and Spain.
- Since 30th November 2003, Chinese citizens can obtain a visa to visit Europe.
- France produces more than 100 million publications on tourism a year.
In 1997, 11 million tourist guides were sold (90% true tourist guides and the others are guides for hotels and restaurants); Michelin Rouge sold more than 500.000 copies (FNOTSI).

- By investing over €900 million to restore 2% of abandoned rural buildings and existing historical villages and town centres and turn them into tourist facilities, it is possible to generate an annual turnover of more than €700 millions: €230m from hotels and other types of facilities and €480m from related activities.
- The Colosseum is the second site most visited in the world, after the Louvre Museum.
- The registered art and historical pieces (exhibited in museums and archaeological areas or held in depots and in private or public collections) account for 5–10% of the Italian heritage; therefore, the largest part of this heritage is not registered (underground, under the sea, held by private individuals or missing) (CNR – National Research Council).

Figure 4 (a) First five worldwide destination for international inbound and (b) European market share (arrivals)% (see online version for colours)



Source: OMT

3 Experience Roma: creation of a laboratory for innovation in the field of cultural tourism

We can consider Stendhal as the first writer in modern days applied to the representation of the tourist fact as a sentimental event. It is characterised by an emotionality that is no more adjustable grounding on the classic-rhetoric admiration parameters. One of the key matters for the short run future will be projecting the overall experience of the tourist.

The 'Da-sein' – being in a place – is certainly the most important aspect of the tourist experience. As known, the conscious visitor dedicates a long time to arranging the journey, studying the possible itineraries and acquiring the most amount of information. Once the visitor comes back home, he wants to recall and, above all, to reminisce and share his memories with others. As a consequence, only a planning of the tourist experience that considers all the phases (and not only the moment of the effective visit) allows a real enrichment.

Italy has developed, during the latest decades, a real leadership in the technologies for the evaluation of Cultural Heritage. Today, thanks to the new digital technologies, the application fields of technologies for Cultural Heritage are significantly augmented. They are not only connected with the internet but also with multimedia technologies, wireless communication, radio-frequency tags and localisation systems (for instance those used by car navigators), personalisation algorithms, search engines and knowledge management, ICT embedding (introduction of electronic chips into materials), process on demand.

4 Vision: where it all began

Four issues can be considered as the starting point of the ‘Experience Roma’ project. Tourism, and in general the experience-based economy is a very relevant and growing sector, but Italy is losing its leading edge at the international level, notwithstanding its extraordinary cultural heritage. Secondly, the end of the economic myth of endless growth and the “end of the boom” of the e-Economy, revamps interest in the past and stimulates the search for roots. Third, digital technology enables new, and hitherto unthought-of, functions to ‘enhance’ experience, including tourist’s experience. It does so by enhancing cognitive and relational functions, helping in identifying places and sites, facilitating interaction, enabling new languages, and giving ‘soul’ to things and places. Last but not least, the territory reassumes its leading role in the economy.

5 Objectives of the project

Qualifying Rome at the “centre of innovation” in terms of cultural tourism, by transforming it in one of the international reference points for the development of innovative technologies and approaches in this field, is an important aim of the ‘Experience Roma’ project. Focusing on innovation and experimentation, Rome has gained a leading position among business districts growing at the highest rate. Projects are easily tested and implemented in Rome as here they benefit from the opportunity to refer culturally to a wealth of tradition. Special attention has been paid in the last years to the areas of cinema, television and the new media, as well as ICT world, both by the national and the local government. Moreover, Rome is a city where art and history instil a special flavour into any other disciplines. Where better than Rome can a brand new business approach to cultural tourism be introduced?

A second objective of ‘Experience Roma’ is to create a project-oriented approach to deliverables (technological platforms, marketing solutions, regulatory schemes) that can be easily replicated in other “art cities” or other cultural sites with a high tourist and cultural value (including music, food and wine ...) so as to build, develop and disseminate an “Italian approach to the development of cultural tourism”.

6 Preliminary conditions for a successful initiative

Creating a cultural tourism destination takes strategic planning built on an understanding that there are different degrees of motivation for culture and that most ‘consumers’ are

looking for a variety of things to do when they travel, or even for an original motivation to do that.

People may travel because of business, personal matters or interests. They may not be particularly interested in culture but would attend an attraction or event if made aware of the opportunities and if it is convenient and offers good value for time and money spent. However, for the most heritage or dedicated tourism organisations and facilities, meeting these needs of tourists is easier said than done. Organisations, as well as public bodies or local government, often do not have the financial resources to build awareness, to create the conditions so that the visit would be truly convenient for tourists, or to offer the value for time and money spent in an increasingly competitive tourist marketplace.

But local government does have a key role to play in the conservation of cultural heritage. Awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and involvement in its identification and conservation has increased over the reporting period, though it is clear that there are still some significant problems to be addressed. Local government action is essential to the conservation of the heritage of the community, and also to its promotion toward any potential market.

Using Rome as an example, the development of:

- An innovative governance approach to the territory – a real “task-force for the innovation of tourism in Rome” for the entities and the organisations to counter the present fragmentation of delegation and information, will be the first step. Firstly, local government actions have a major influence on the historic environment as a whole, through management of strategic planning at the local level and their day-to-day management of the historic environment. Secondly, they exert a major influence on the management of heritage items through the development assessment process. Thirdly, as major owners of heritage places, they can demonstrate leadership in best practice management of our rural and urban historic environment. Their influence on local private investors may also come in useful.

The task force is intended to be a direct expression of the project team. It deals with the coordination and promotion of innovative solutions by creating a unitary approach to the analysis and experimentation of new technologies and methodologies on the territory, thus overcoming the present fragmentation. Among its main tasks is the scouting of innovative opportunities (Observatory); turnkey project proposals (rationale, business plan, funding schemes); the monitoring of tourist-oriented innovative projects through a control-panel as well as the creation of an interface with opinion leaders (mainly the press and destination hub of cultural tourism) to communicate ‘novelties’.

In response to the existing situation at heritage sites, characterised by limited involvement in decision-making by local stakeholders and a lack of understanding between various layers of stakeholders (local government, organisations, etc.), the Task Force will provide a forum for dialogue. By strengthening institutional platforms and providing options for sustainable developing cultural assets, coordination between actors will be enhanced, policy planning improved and clear work management plans developed, thereby ensuring better management of heritage tourism sites and the optimal use of resources.

- The creation of an ‘outdoors laboratory’ to test infrastructures, services and business models involving tourists, not only in terms of validation but also in terms of planning, seems to be a step forward, to be then completed by
- The implementation of a “project-oriented approach” in order to ensure consistent vision, objectives, project rationale and communication formats and, at the same time, to extend the solutions developed to other territorial contexts.

7 Why Rome?

It is a cosmopolitan city – one of the great examples of ‘universal’ sites – that has maintained its specificity. It has continuously and consistently produced culture. Epochs and styles coexist in harmony. It has an important tradition in designing experiences, in the field of cultural heritage, tourism, film-making and the use of state-of-the-art technologies. It has a major tradition in the audiovisual industry (multimedia and ICT). Rome is a fast moving city. Its incredible assets are complemented by a flexible structure which aggregates the best available expertise in the university research, the demand of innovation coming from companies and professionals with the aim of advancing professionalism, research and creativity, giving new answers to the continuously evolving technological, productive and professional contexts. World widely known as the capital of history and home of most of the world’s cultural sites, Rome is ‘by nature’ entitled to conceive the best possible approach to cultural destination management.

8 Concrete initiatives of the ‘Experience Roma’ project

Within the concept ‘Experience Roma’ there are several projects, some of which are already working. Others are in the implementation or study phase. The “High training school for ‘designers’ and ‘managers’ of cultural experience” project was started on November 2007. It has been implemented, together with the prestigious design school Domus Academy. The aim of this school is to train new creators of tourist–cultural products. It is characterised by highly multidisciplinary contents and by a high degree of internationalisation.

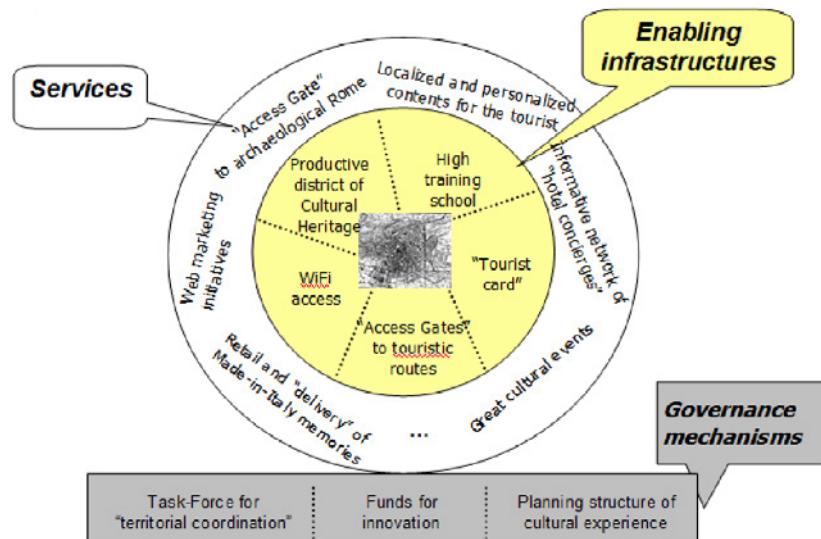
The “Access Gate to Archaeological Rome” (See Figure 5) consists in the creation of a “point of departure” from the archaeological heart of Rome in order to visit its archaeological heritage. This place will be used as a “destination management site” to receive and guide tourists around the extraordinary, but fragmented, archaeological reality of Rome. It will also be an “outdoors laboratory” in order to test infrastructures, services and business models that involve visitors, not only in terms of validation but also in terms of planning.

Another project, named ‘Wireless initiatives’, has as its purpose the creation of individualised contents and location services for tourists, and the installation of a Wi-Fi network in areas with high tourist and cultural value. Moreover, this will serve as an important tool to test contents, services and terminals. “Infomediary of technologies for cultural heritage” is the creation of a permanent infomediary service in order to point out and follow up business opportunities categorised by innovation technology.

It will plan and develop standardised ways to spread innovation opportunities, it will test ways and service processes able to reduce the organisation's impact and the costs connected with spread actions on firms. The construction of 'Personalised circuits' is based on the use of the new digital media (web TV, 'flying bird' satellite maps, print-on-demand) in order to narrate to future tourists, with higher effectiveness and personalisation, the territory and its beauty.

Other two projects that are still in the study phase are the 'Integrated tourist Card' and the "experimentation centre of new digital languages in order to narrate the territory". The first project plans the creation of the Italian tourist Card that represents an integrated and systematic approach in order to support the tourist during his stay in Italy. This card will supply personalised services to the tourist and it will maximise his spending capacity. The second one consists in the creation of an experimentation centre of languages and expressive forms enabled by the new digital languages in order to narrate, emotionally, the historic and artistic beauty of the country.

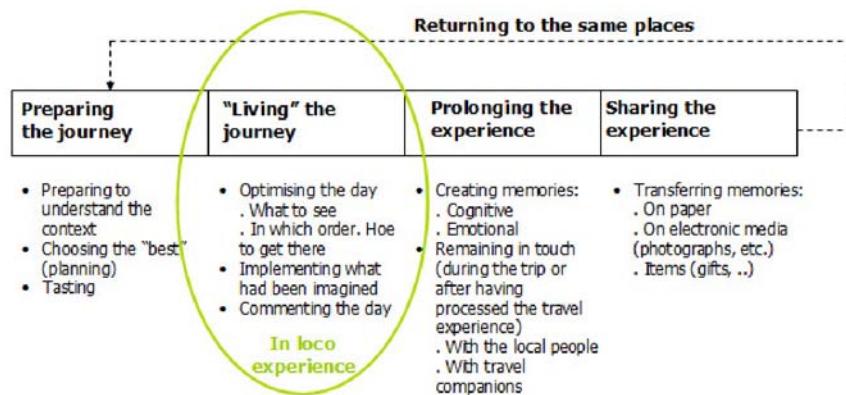
Figure 5 Translation of the vision in a planning approach (see online version for colours)



The basis of these projects is the complete consciousness of the value of the experience. Experience is the emotional and cognitive relation of the self with the world and it takes place in a particular context. Cultural experience lasts over time, modifies the memory, creates the identity, changes the person and it could also create 'extreme passions' (the so called Stendhal's syndrome). The tourist experience does not run out during the visit. It starts with the preparation of the journey in which the tourist prepares himself to understand the context and plans the journey, choosing the 'best' to see and to do. He also starts tasting and looking forward the visit. As shown in Figure 6, the second phase: 'living' the journey, is the effective in loco experience. In this phase the tourist organises his days trying to optimise the time (what to see, in which order, how to get there, among other things). In the third phase the tourist extends his experience, creating cognitive and emotional memories and remaining in touch with local people and travel companions. The last phase permits him to transfer memories and

allows him to share his experience with others. The organisation and ‘perpetuation’ of the experience is the privileged field of new digital technologies rich content and it needs ‘overall’ planning.

Figure 6 Manage the overall experience of the tourist (see online version for colours)



9 “High training school for ‘designers’ and ‘managers’ of cultural experience”

An ever increasing share of economic exchanges in their most innovative form is more connected to commercialisation of experiences than objects and services industrially produced. As a consequence, a new economic model, known as experience economy, is evolving. The importance of this model does not depend only on the fact that there are a lot of sectors in which the product is the experience, such as, for instance, tourism, sports, health, entertainment, education, and gambling. The success of ‘standard’ products will also depend more on the lived experience than from supplied performances that are becoming similar among competing products. The planning instrument that allows this approach is the “design of experience”. The experience designer needs to know, first of all, business planning, marketing, art history and interior design. Secondly, she or he must be expert in human science in order to comprehend the different aspects and peculiarities that characterise people who are the subjects and producers of cultural experiences. Thirdly, communication science knowledge is needed to convey product characteristics and is too important to be left in the technician’s hands. For example: The ability to narrate or to tell stories is a fundamental and specific skill of directors and actors and not of technicians. Lastly, a deep knowledge of technology is necessary since the experience is increasingly made up of technology, and its planning is contingent on the possibilities and limits of technology.

The experience designer does not need to be creative, but he must be able to manage creative people and coordinate them toward a common objective. In order to collect these competences in a single character Domus Academy (one of the most famous design school in the world) and IRFI have developed the first international master’s course in cultural experience design. It will create professional characters with diversified competences required for the economic development of the country and actually absent

from the market. The heart of the master’s programme will be the valorisation of the place. It will develop more than only the competences connected with tourism.

Future experience designers will become capable of planning the so-called ‘shopping experience’. That is, the overall experience that the consumer has in the shopping areas. Many innovative enterprises, for instance Prada, Apple, American Apparel, Antrophologie, Urban Outfitter, are investing highly in order to transform their stores into places where the consumer lives a true experience which belongs to a community. The experience designer could cover more and more important roles in firms: the developing of services and, in particular, the community building which is more than the simple managing of the relationships with the consumer. It will be the creation of strong community cohesion mechanisms that tie the consumer to the brand and permit to increase the overall value of the community and the relative membership sense.

10 “Access gate to archaeological Rome”

The “Access Gate to Archaeological Rome” project will imply the construction of a collection of infrastructures and services in order to make the visit to archaeological Rome easier, and enrich it both on the cultural and the emotional fronts. The main objectives of the project are the realisation of an orientation portal to the visit to Archaeological Rome, with a high emotive impact and which will represent, for the visitor, the first ‘contact’ with Rome; and also, the creation of an ‘outdoors laboratory’ in order to test infrastructures, services and business models that involves visitors not only in terms of validation but also in terms of planning.

The ‘Access Gates’ is a physical place that represents a powerful instrument of destination management in order to orient and enhance, also emotionally, the tour experience in the extraordinary, but fragmented, archaeological reality of Rome. But, the ‘Access Gate’ is, above all, a service infrastructure in order to test technologies and devices. Its main functions will be: firstly, an orientation centre for tourists to guide them through the great archaeological heritage of Rome (“the point of departure for each visit”); secondly, the reconstruction of main monuments (‘as they were’) and of what happened there (‘how they lived’); thirdly, for the creation of narrative circuits providing a context (historic, artistic, scientific, literary, fiction...) for artistic creations and monuments. Fourthly, it will be an icon to present Roman archaeological heritage within a unitary and consistent framework (like the Louvre Pyramid). Lastly, it will be a selling point for cultural ‘merchandising’.

Formed by halls, gardens and outdoor spaces, Traiano Markets represent an architectural complex of high historical and artistic value and an ideal place to host an Access Gate. Traiano Markets have also been recently restructured in order to widen the accessible areas and to increase security. The exhibition “Imagine Ancient Rome” (See Figure 7.) has been a first experimentation with tourists concerning the use of digital applications in order to reconstruct and ‘visit’ archaeological sites. It has shown how great instruments are innovative digital applications to encourage visits. This exhibition, that took place at the Traiano Markets, has doubled the number of visitors. It hosted, in only two months, more than 28.000 visitors.

Figure 7 Imagine ancient Rome

11 The expected results of the 'Experience Roma' project

The expected results in the short and medium term of the initiatives connected with the Experience Roma project will be: recognition by the foreign press of the leadership of Rome as a laboratory on cultural tourism, enhancement of the perception of Rome as a cool tourist destination, and not linked only to its great past (fascinating but belonging to the 'past'). This will be accompanied by the growth of the sector linked with the protection and upgrading of cultural heritage, the so-called 'production sector' of Cultural Heritage. However, in the long-term there will be an increase in quality tourism (and, in particular, growth of the average expenditure for tourists), a longer average stay of tourists and an increase in private contributions (deriving from the growth of the overall value of the sector) in funding the conservation of cultural heritage.

The approach that is being implemented in the 'Experience Roma' project is aimed at asserting the importance of the cultural sites and the value a city like Rome – and a country like Italy – may add to a comprehensive, innovative approach to the development of cultural tourism.

The expertise, the skills, the invaluable resources that are part of it may be of use for any other city – or site – wishing to increase its success in the international cultural tourism scenario. In other words: creating a project-oriented approach to deliverables (technological platforms, marketing solutions, regulatory schemes) that can be easily used in other 'art cities' or other sites with a high tourist and cultural value (including music, food and wine...) so as to build, develop and disseminate an 'Italian way'.

Note

²World Tourism Organization (WTO).

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