SMART CITIES FOR SMART TOURISTS. THE CASE OF TIMISOARA

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CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

- Modernity & urbanization – 70% of the world population
- Technologically rich environments
- Projections regarding the future of the city
- Place vs non–place (Marc Auge)

THE DANGER OF "NON-PLACENESS"

- "The individual wants to be a world in himself: he intends to interpret the information delivered to him by himself and for himself" (Auge – Non-places, 1995)

- Non-places: are not automatically meeting places and do not build common references to groups

- Globalization condemns many places, to become non-places

FEATURES OF DIGITAL CONSUMPTION

- Ubiquitous information access and computing
- Reduction of information costs
- Interactive communication
- Volitional control
- Information overload

SMART TOURISTIC DESTINATIONS

- Information and communication technology result in a dulling or numbing of senses, the neutralization of meaning and a prevention of response on the part of audiences (Baudrillard).

- To counteract = to offer instantaneous information and create the occasion for emotional experiences

- Smart people expect to travel smart!

SMART TOURISM

- More than booking systems and recommendations
- More than ticket reservations and appraisal of predecessor
- More than supplying maps and apps

EXAMPLES OF SMARTNESS

- Apps to forecast aurora borealis (Norway)
- Apps to identify plants in the botanical garden (Montpellier, France)
- Apps to visit museums and historical sites
- Apps to have selfies with celebrities (Best Western Hotel – USA)
- Etc.

THE CASE OF TIMISOARA

- Tradition in innovation and modernization (street lighting 1884, MECIPT1 – 1961, fastest internet in Romania, first publicly accessible strawberry tree – 2015 etc.)

- Synergy of authorities, business, NGOs (Smart city) and academia

- Political will: local city council adhered to a major "smart city project" (2014)

- Hackathons as a test for local creativity

- Expectation of increase in developing apps, due to the nomination "European capital of culture" for 2021.

RELEVANT RESULTS: mysmartcity.ro

- Four completed projects

- Timisoara Art City – augmented reality, identification of buildings, sculptures and art objects in the city center

- Timisoara Street history– a century of urban toponymy

WHAT NEXT? (CONSEQUENCES)

- Cities need new ways of telling their story
- The tourists will retain those emotional ties which were rich and meaningful
- Interest towards increasing the meaningfulness of touristic destinations

MAIN ISSUES AND CONCERNS

ASSETS

- "Smart" local community
- Intelligent, creative volunteers
- Availability of open data
- Favorable trend

CONCERNS

- Systematic approach
- Stronger financial support
- Enhancement of data availability
- Better estimation of demand