

Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Tourism

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Preface

The impetus to produce this text stemmed from our observation that despite the considerable body of research in the tourism literature focusing on sustainable tourism development, very little offered pragmatic solutions to how sustainable tourism can indeed become a workable reality. We contemplated that this might be accomplished through the use of technology and, indeed, the doctoral research completed by Alisha Ali was founded on this premise.

The research established that there was little published work on the uses, applications, values and benefits of using technology for sustainable tourism development. Despite an acute understanding of the relationship between tourism and the environment and tourism and technology, there was limited consideration of how technology can be used to alleviate the challenges faced in sustainable tourism development. This led to our decision to write this volume, which offers a starting point in exploring this emerging topic not only for researchers and students, but also for industry practitioners and policy makers.

The core intention of this text is to provide a heightened understanding of how technology can be used for sustainable tourism development. Given the organic nature of the tourism industry, its numerous stakeholders and the rapid developments in technology, we have attempted to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. We tried to paint a representative landscape of technology use in tourism by first developing an understanding of sustainable tourism, and then drilling down into the differing applications of technology. Research in this area thus far has been disparate, and we have drawn on this and other sources of literature to offer a cohesive picture of how we can implement such technology for sustainable development in the tourism industry. Alongside this backdrop, we have used illustrative examples and case studies where appropriate, provided a glossary for the technical terms and have raised questions related to each chapter to help the reader in his/her understanding.

Sustainability and technology are by no means new topics, but in a world where resources are finite and tourism faces new trials on a daily basis, a new ethos needs to be adopted for us to think about creative ways to propel the industry forward ahead of these challenges. The topic of technology use for sustainable tourism can undoubtedly be idealised; however, research and understanding is integral for its successful implementation. We hope this text has provided useful insights for those who would like to engage with this subject.

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