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Online Course: Frameworks for Future Tourism
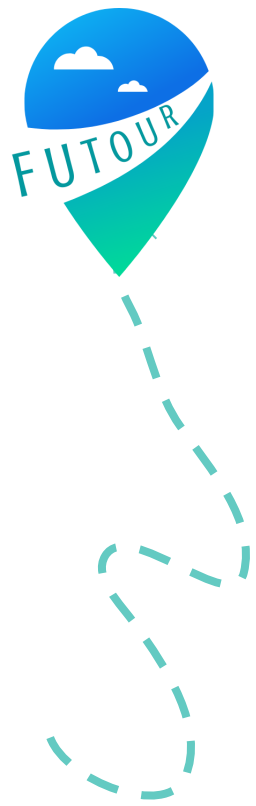
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Framework and the Scope of the Unit

Unit 11 will equip teachers with a set of tools to research actual tourism trends.

This Unit's proposed content are:

- **Understanding the touristic needs of different generations** (Boomer, Generation Z , Generation Y, etc…);

- **How and where to find online trends.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.

Tourism Trends

Industries are continually disrupted by new trends and new innovations, and the tourism industry is no exception to this.
Knowing these emerging tourism trends can help business to stay competitive and face customer needs.
Some of these trends have been a direct or indirect result of the COVID-19 pandemic.[1]

1. Safety & Hygiene Tourism Trends

- Many current tourism trends are related to this topic, such as increased cleaning, socially distanced seating, providing hand gel and enforcing masks in some settings.

- It is also now a vital part of tourism marketing, with companies needing to make clear what their hygiene and safety policies are and what measures they are taking to keep customers safe. The threat of COVID has meant people are more reluctant to travel and visit tourism hot spots, so they will need to be persuaded that it is safe. [2]

2. Growth of Contactless Payments

- Contactless payments have been a staple when it comes to technology in tourism for some time now, but the emergence of options like Google Pay and Apple Pay has helped to take this to the next level, meaning customers do not even need to carry around a debit card or credit card to pay for meals, hotel stays, transport, and other services.

- Allowing contactless payments has enabled tourism companies to reduce friction and improve the speed of check-ins and check-outs. It also means goods can be paid for swiftly, encouraging spontaneous purchases. With coronavirus, contactless payments are in greater demand than ever, as staff and customers often prefer to avoid handling cash. [3]


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3. Voice Search & Voice Control

- With home smart speakers growing in popularity, as well as mobile assistants like Siri, Google Assistant and Bixby, more and more tourism customers are turning to voice search. For those in the tourism industry, it is important to capture these guests by properly structuring website content, so it appears in voice search and allows for voice bookings. [2]

- Tourist information is a key part of the customer experience with many companies and voice control can play an important role in it as information can be provided immediately and up-to-date at any time of day and night. Moreover, such technology can be included in hotel rooms with smart speakers or other IoT (Internet of Things) devices that are compatible with voice control.

4. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Tourism Trends
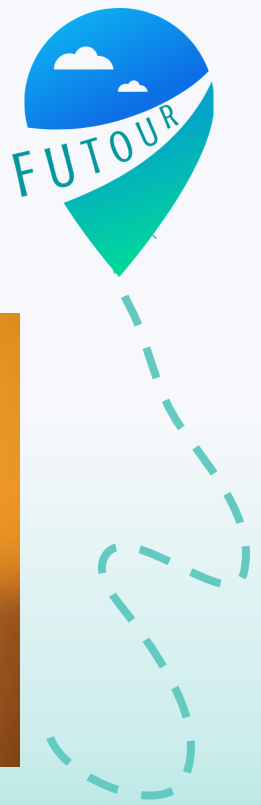
- Virtual reality is another of the major tourism trends disrupting the industry and capitalizing on the technology can give you an edge over rivals who have not yet adopted it. Through online VR tours, customers can experience hotel interiors, restaurant interiors, outdoor tourist attractions and more, all from their home. Crucially, they can do this at the decision-making phase of the customer journey. [4]

- Where VR simulates entire environments and experiences, augmented reality combines real-world experiences and virtual elements. AR smartphone apps can show tourists information about the area they're exploring.

5. Solo Travel
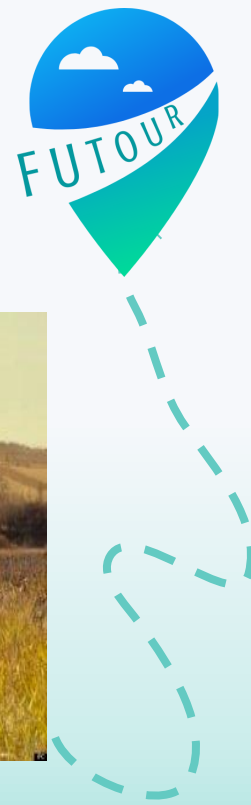
- Leisure travel used to be a family affair or something that couples undertook together. While that's still the case for many, more and more people are choosing to strike out on their own. Enjoying a solo trip is no longer so unusual and tourist trends increasingly reflect this. The needs of solo travellers are diverse, as they are a very diverse group.[5] However, this tourism trend is set to grow and grow, and with it, the offers catering to the needs of solo travelers should increase as well. Indeed, data does not only show that the solo travel market is growing steadily (with solo bookings almost doubling in the post-pandemic, compared to 2020), but also that most solo travelers prefer to take escorted tours at least sometimes (23.7% always, 64.4% sometimes).[14] Market Forecast 2028 see solo travel dominate the global leisure market.

6. Eco Travel

- Tourism trends are heavily influenced by the concerns and mores of the customer base. As a new generation becomes increasingly relevant in the marketplace, the ideals driving their purchasing decisions create new tourism trends. Eco travel is just one example of these tourism trends, reflecting a growing concern among today's travelers for ethical and sustainable tourism options. Eco travel includes simple changes, such as the availability of carbon credits when booking a flight or the option to rent an electric instead of a conventional vehicle. More sophisticated examples might include tourism with a volunteer element, perhaps working on a nature reserve or engaging in conservation work. [6]
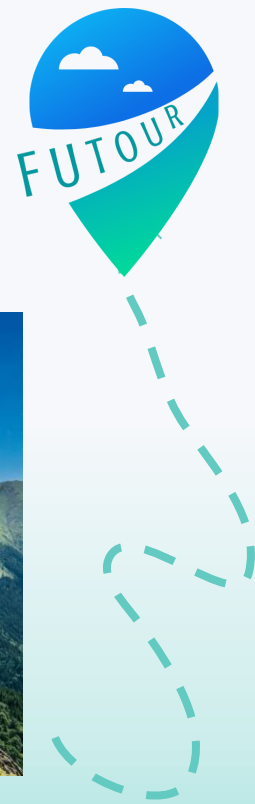
7. Local Experience

- Today's tourists don't want to be insulated from the places they visit inside a cultural bubble. They want to engage with and participate in the local culture. From enjoying local cuisine to celebrating regional festivals and holidays, local experiences are set to become some of the top tourist trends to watch.[15] One example of a popular local experience would be visiting a place during a major festival, renting formal clothes to wear, consuming regional delicacies and engaging in traditional games or cultural activities. Another might be a long stay with a host family in the destination country to learn more about the local culture rather than stay at a hotel room. [7]

8. Personalization

- You're probably familiar with those ads that pop up on social media and certain other websites, related to things you've looked at or purchased online. This is just one example of personalization. As well as in marketing tourism more effectively, personalization can apply to every aspect of the tourist experience. Today's consumers expect experiences that closely match their personal preferences, from destination to accommodation, and the kinds of activities they'll engage in. The more closely an experience can be tailored to a client's desires and expectations, the more likely they are to return and to use the same service again. [8]

9. Robots, Chatbots and Automation

- One of the more eye-catching examples of these tourism trends is Connie, the Hilton Hotel chain's robot concierge. Other hotels have also got in on the robot-staff trend, installing interactive robots to handle certain reception duties or even having them serve food and drink to visitors. This kind of novelty application, however, is far from the only one. Many customers now book their travel and accommodation with the help of internet chatbots, specifically tailored AI (Artificial Intelligence) who can handle queries and assist customers with useful information when human operators are unavailable. [9]

10. Artificial Intelligence

- As well as the chatbots, Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly important to the tourism industry. Machine learning technology is now firmly entrenched in the marketing of the tourism sector, with AI helping to personalize the experience of finding and booking tours and trips. AI is also increasingly valuable in contexts such as smart hotel rooms, identifying the likely needs of guests and fine-tuning the environment and services to fit the guest's needs and preferences. Artificial intelligence is finding applications everywhere, from customer service to security. Future AI tourism trends to watch out for might include self-driving vehicles and virtual guides for tourism.[9]

II. Recognition Technology

- Recognition technology is one of those increasingly important travel and tourism trends that's starting to creep into a multitude of different areas. One of the most familiar applications of recognition technology for a frequent traveller is the bank of automatic gates at some borders. The gates are capable of reading the data on the traveller's passport or ID card and matching it to their face using a camera and facial recognition technology. Recognition technology is one of the big tourism trends in the hospitality industry too, with voice recognition becoming more and more popular as a method of control in smart hotel rooms[2]
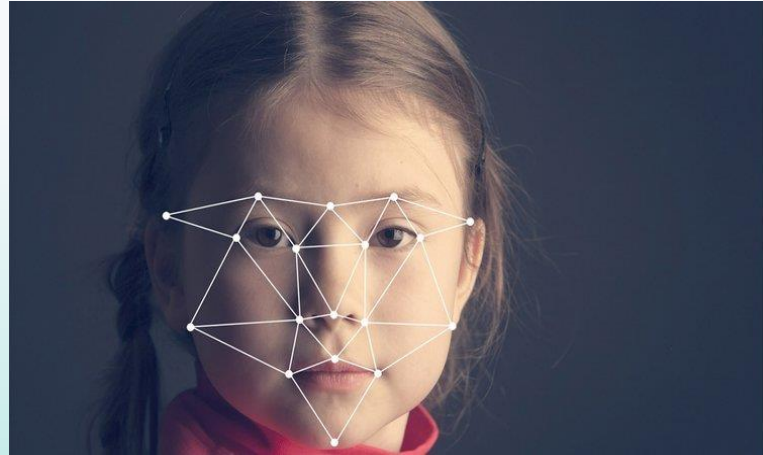
12. Healthy and Organic Food

- Healthy food and the kind of fare consumed by tourists used to be antonyms in the minds of many travellers, with holidays traditionally representing a chance to break one's diet and indulge in forbidden treats. Today's travellers know that delicious and nutritious are not exclusive concepts. Demand for excellent cuisine with a view to better nutrition is driving new tourism trends. The modern tourist wants to know that the food they're eating is as healthy as it is delicious. The organic food movement is also affecting tourism trends, with more eateries and hotels offering organic options. Other special diets are also represented.[17, 18]
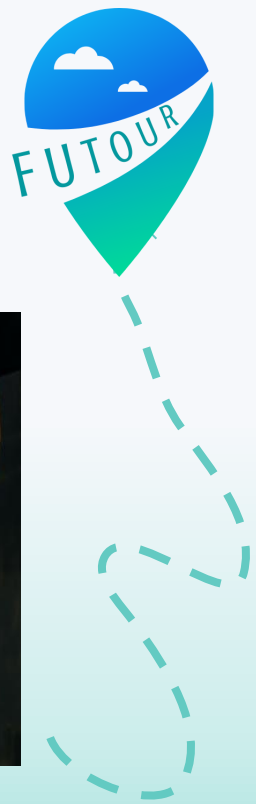
13. Customer Experience 2.0

- Of course, the customer experience has always been central to the tourist industry. With new technologies and an ever-broadening array of options for tourists, enhancing the customer experience has never been more vital. In the final analysis, customer experience is what will make or break your business. Fine-tuning the experience can make the difference between creating a loyal repeat customer who boosts your business via word of mouth, and one who drops out at the booking stage. Everything from the web interface where your clients book their trips to the very last day of their journey needs to be as enjoyable as possible. [10]

14. Nostalgic Travel Options

- Tourism trends are also increasingly being impacted by a generalized thirst for nostalgia among the public, and nostalgic travel options represent a significant opportunity for businesses. Nostalgia can inform travel decisions in several ways, such as a longing for simpler times and encouraging travellers to book trips to remote locations.[11] Alternatively, nostalgia could see travellers focus on domestic trips, with a particular focus on places they visited and/or lived in when they were younger.[12] Some travellers may also focus on destinations that they have a long-established connection with, such as through films they have enjoyed, video games they have played, or music they love.

2.

Tourism and the different generations

KNOW YOUR GENERATIONS

How is each generation outlining new tourism trends?

As we have already reported, different generations means different habits. As Generation Zs are starting to influence their families' travel choices, the oldest generations are changing their habits, generating new trends. **Expedia Media Solution realised a study called "Multi-generational Travel Trends"**, based on a sample of about 3000 British, German and French travellers of different ages, in order to detect their behavior.

2. The Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946-1964)
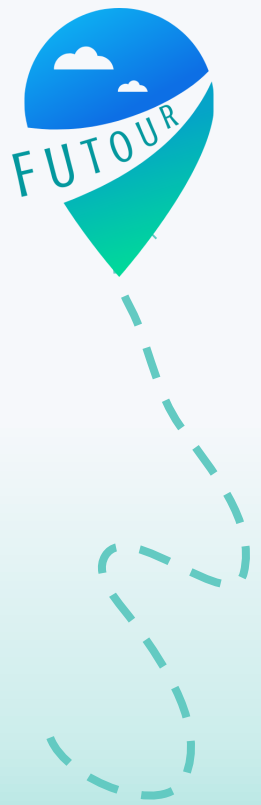
- Baby boomers, along with Millennials, are one of the most misunderstood and mislabeled groups of the entire list. Countless internet jokes and videos of young people saying "Ok boomer!" in referencing an older person not understanding the modern world and how it works.

- The baby boomers are actually one of the most *relevant* groups in modern society as they were integral and present for many of the technology advances in the last 50 years. They have been more adaptable to modern growth and learning how to function in today's technological age. Boomers are between the ages of 58 and 75.

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Baby Boomers and new tourism trends[13]

- Baby Boomers seem to be more aware of the destination where they're going, but they still want help and support during the booking process.

- Their main travel motivation is relax (53%), followed by sightseeing (48%).

- During the planning phase of a trip, they mostly rely on OTAs' portals (54%) and search engines (46%) and are the generation which visits more destination sites (20%) if compared to other generations.

- Choosing the destination basing on social medias, they are inspired by a good offer advertisement (55%) and by pictures posted by experts (46%). Moreover, they are usually attracted by informative ads (49%) and less by pictures (34%).

- When it comes to booking, they prefer OTAs (50%), mainly accessing the internet from a desktop device in every step taken before the travel.

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# 3. Generation X (born 1965-1980)

- As with Baby Boomers, Gen X'ers are the most relevant generation of modern times in relation to technology and serve almost as a bridge from older populations to younger ones. They were present for the inception of the internet, video games, artificial intelligence and is the population that has created many of these advances.

- This groups of folks is currently between the ages of 43 and 57.

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Generation X and new tourism trends [13]

- Generation X mostly relies on OTAs (51%), but also show interest towards travel reviews sites (41%) while planning the travel while they prefer OTAs (52%) when booking.

- They are the generation that shows more interest towards resorts (10%) and alternative accommodations (12%). Their travel choices are family-oriented (68%).

- Choosing the destination on social medias, they prefer watching videos posted by experts to get inspired, while they do not pay too much attention to blogs and articles (27%).

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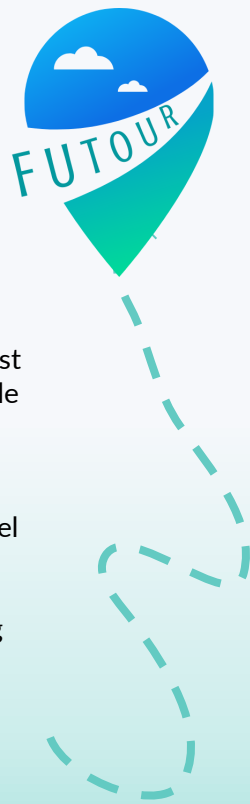
4. Millennials (born 1981-1996)

- As mentioned, alongside of Gen X'ers, Millennials are greatly misunderstood and often mislabeled. Older folks can tend to blame someone younger for being a "Millennial" when they don't understand the values of older times and hold the same views as they did when they were young.

- It's quite common to hear someone use the term Millennial to refer to people in their 20s, although true Millennials are between the ages of 27 and 42.

Millennials and new tourism trends [13]

- Millennials take more trips than other generations (4.3 per year).

- They are no longer mostly relying on OTAs during the travel planning process (48%), even if these are still the favorite platforms to book (50%).

- Millennials are the least likely generation to stay in alternative accommodations (9%), preferring hotels (65%). When choosing a destination, they are oriented towards once-in-a-lifetime experiences (70%) and off the beaten path locations (69%).

- Surprisingly, they are also interested in relaxing all day in spas and resorts (59%). In fact, as reported by the **Global Wellness Institute**, Millennials are considered to be "anxious generation", due to economic uncertainty.

- Getting inspired on social medias, they prefer watching pictures posted by friends (45%) or their videos (32%).

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5. Generation Z (born 1997-2012)

- This group of younger people is an interesting one. They have been exposed to social media and were the first population to cope with cyber-bullying and other internet related issues.

- This large group of people are between the ages of 11 and 26.

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Generation Z and new tourism trends [13]

- **Generation Z (18- yo) is the most likely one to rely on metasearch engines when planning a travel (39%), even if they prefer search engines (50%).**

- Moreover, they interestingly rely on travel agents (13%), blogs (15%) and social sites (20%), scoring the highest percentages among all generations.

- When booking, OTAs are no longer the preferred portals (43%), now competing with search engines (43%). While travelling, they prefer hotels (58%), but also like to stay at relatives or friends' house (16%).

- Budget is a key factor while travelling (79%), and they tend to spend more on flights (20%) and shopping (9%).

- When choosing a destination, they strongly consider the number of **pictures they will be able to share on social medias** and the **uniqueness of the experience**

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Activities for the Learners

1 - Based on the trends listed in the previous slides, decide which ones fit your business and why.
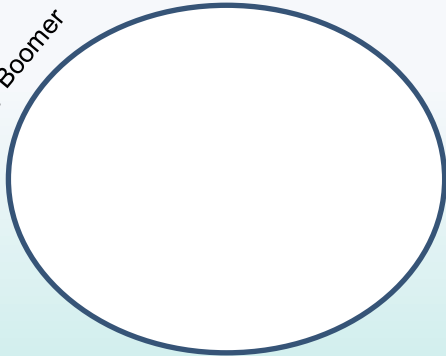
- Make your points:

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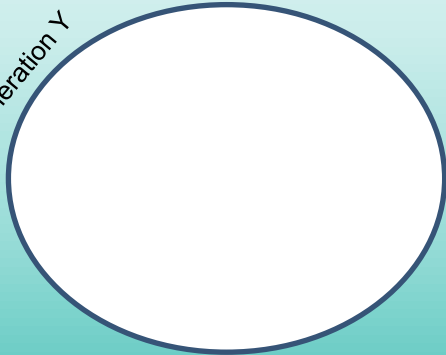 -
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2 – For each generation, imagine and search on internet their ideal accommodation. Put the pictures in the white ovals and explain your choice.
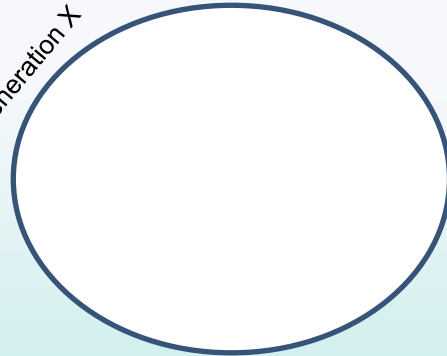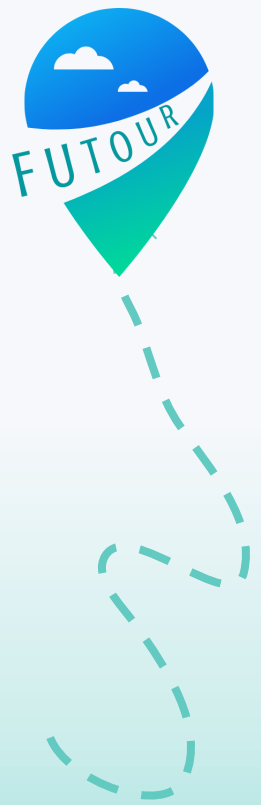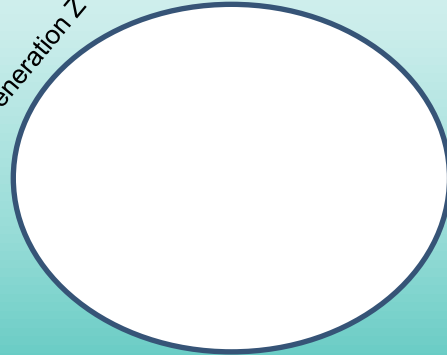
Baby Boomer

Generation X

Generation Y

Generation Z

3 – For each of the accommodations you picked in the previous assignment, propose a marketing strategy specific to the respective target audiences

- Provide **at least** 1 of the following for each generation: topic, format, channel, and visitor's profile to enable personalization

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Reading Resources

1. Tourism marketing for cities and towns: Using Social media and Branding to Attract Tourists. Benita Kolb, published by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group (2017, II edition)

2. Millennials, Generation Z and the Future of Tourism. Fabio Corbisiero, Salvatore Monaco, Elisabetta Ruspini; published by Channel View Books (2022)

3. Generation Z Marketing and Management in Tourism and Hospitality: The Future of the Industry. Edited by Nikolaos Stylos, Roya Rahimi, Bendegul Okumus, Sarah Williams; published by Palgrave Macmillan (2021)

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THANKS!

Do you have any questions?