Tony Nankervis - Applications of Technology in Visitor Attractions: Revisiting Stipanuk’s (1993) Perspective of the Tourism/Technology Interface

Abstract
In what is now seems a strikingly prophetic examination of technological applications in tourism, Shafer (1989, p.2), observed that “science and technology [are] often the wild cards in the tourism strategic planning game – appearing unexpectedly, creating entirely new markets or causing further segmentation of current ones”. Despite describing Schafer’s work as “visionary and innovative” (Stipanuk 1993, p.267) bemoaned the narrowness of the literature relating to the interaction between technology and tourism and called for a view of technology that [goes] beyond considerations of simply “technology-as tool”. In doing so Stipanuk called for a multi-dimensional perspective which is likewise visionary in nature. This paper revisits Stipanuk’s conceptual framework and examines it in the more specific context of visitor attractions. A number of contemporary examples are used to illustrate both modern applications and forward implications. As a basis for ongoing research a conceptual model is advanced which hypothesises varying degrees of technological application across a broad taxonomic spectrum of attractions.