

# Technology crucial in changing, advancing the tourism industry

Technology has eradicated borders and tedious admin in the tourism space. Businesses have had to continuously adjust to the ongoing advances that have a direct impact on both their profitability and visibility in the marketplace.

Today, any consumer with a smart device can effectively book and pay for a holiday from anywhere on earth. Charnel Kara, tourism specialist at First National Bank Business takes a look at some technological advancement that continues to advance or disturb the tourism industry.



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**Online booking portals.** Every major airline, hotel group and transport company now has a mobile application that allows users to book aspects of their trip via their mobile phone, from just about anywhere in the world, with the added convenience of 24/7 accessibility.

**Free Wi-Fi.** It's becoming non-negotiable for consumers – most accommodation establishments have responded by providing a capped amount of data daily. One of the latest trends in this space has been the introduction of in-flight Wi-Fi, with many airlines introducing this, but at an additional cost.

**Hospitality loyalty cards.** The introduction of loyalty/reward programs has become an invaluable tool that assists a business to create specials, receive feedback on their facilities, products and give targeted specials to regular clients.

**Social media.** Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have become household names over the years. These platforms paired with a website or a blog enable a business to participate online. It allows travellers to also get information and reviews of destinations before they spend their money – very little exists without social media influence today.

**Interactive maps.** Today, the navigation technology embedded in smartphone apps allow for easier access to any place in the world. With the introduction of Google Maps, going wrong with directions has become nearly impossible for travellers. The impact on the industry is that there are now more spaces, which are easier to find competing for the same spend.

**Tech free zones.** The flip side to technology growing at the pace that it has, is that too many people have become engrossed by it. It almost seems as though human interaction is fast fading and the world is becoming a wired place. Some resorts and hotels have identified this gap in the market and are capitalising on this as an opportunity, introducing tech-free zones with the intention of providing travellers with pleasurable time away from the electronic world.

“With the advances in technology, new techniques and gadgets being introduced to the market, the delivery of high-end products, services, comforts and convenience to travellers should remain top of mind for service providers to remain relevant in the market. This along with impeccable delivery of services and products to consumers, is what keeps businesses, in business,” concludes Kara.

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