DIGITAL TOURISM

Digital Tourism Course is now fully designed

One of the main goals of the “Digital Tourism” project was the creation of a European Qualification Framework level IV three years course. This task was coordinated by INSIGNARE, one of the Portuguese organisations, and had the support of all partners.

The design process began with a template which would be the basis for the development of the course, agreed by all partners. This template is used in several European countries and it includes all the relevant components VET providers will require to offer the course.

Then, after having the job profile, the Portuguese team from INSIGNARE divided the course technological curricula in three main axes: Tourism, Marketing, and Digital.

Having received the partners’ positive feedback, this first draft was presented to the Portuguese VET validating Authority and it was approved.

The third stage could begin. For several weeks, that team discussed and wrote down the content of each Learning Sub-Unit, using the mentioned template:

• Job Achievements – what the learner is capable to do after concluding it;
• Performance Criteria – what the teacher / trainer will assess to validate the learning;
• Outputs – what the learner will produce as learning outcomes;

https://digitaltourism.wixsite.com/digitaltourism

https://www.facebook.com/DigitalTourismeu/

https://www.instagram.com/digitaltourismeu/

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• Resources – the equipment and tools the VET provider should have for the learners to use during the learning process;
• Knowledge – the main facts and the main concepts;
• Ability – the physical and mental performance of an activity or task;
• Attitude – the most relevant behaviours to be shown related to the topic.

The final version was then presented to the partners for their evaluation and feedback, before being sent to the VET validating Authorities of the participating countries. The final stage will be the course becoming available throughout Europe for VET providers.

The course can be found at the project website available at this link.

Digital Tourism Professional… Why?

Without international tourists and with a very small impact of domestic tourism, the hotel industry in Portugal and more specifically in Fátima, is going through very difficult times. After a first wave of the COVID-19 virus, with a big impact, we are now faced with a second wave around the world. There are still other factors that are important to analyse in this context. Tourists who still continue to take advantage of their free and leisure time to do tourism, significantly reduced the average stay in places and consequently the number of nights in hotel establishments. In a brief analysis, it is worrying to understand the state...
of tourism, as a sector of great importance in the country's economy. It is essential to review the stakeholders and define strategies for a future that is uncertain. Considering that the price reduction policy is not an efficient methodology, it may even have an inverse impact on the potential tourist / customer, it is essential to reorganise the marketing and advertising plan, developing new concepts to reach potential customers.

The KA3 Digital Tourism project has come to a standstill due to the pandemic and the consequent suffering of the tourism sector, which has seen a considerable reduction in tourist flows into the region of Umbria (Italy).

The extension of one year, which indicates September 2022 as the end of the project, has given the necessary time to give concreteness to this important project and to continue with the training in digital tourism of the participants who will start their internships in specialised tourism enterprises. Surely finding host companies in such a complicated period for the tourism sector is not easy.

Fortunately the signs of recovery in Umbria are quite encouraging. After the long lockdown, something began to move between May and June, when the region's tourism website registered a surge in access.

Good prospects for experimentation within the KA3 Digital Tourism project

Nowadays it is unthinkable to consider tourism without associating it with its digital component. The preparation of campaigns, promotions and sales, loyalty strategies, monitoring the customer through specific apps, collecting information on customer satisfaction, among others, are essential for the challenges that arise for the future.

The professional Course in Digital Tourism aims to be an important and strong contribution to the new times of hospitality and tourism...

The training / preparation of qualified professionals to develop content using the digital component is very important. The Professional Course and Digital Tourism aims to meet this need to prepare professionals with knowledge in tourism industry, marketing, and the digital aspect, providing them with the knowledge to prepare different and differentiating contents that arouse interest in potential customers for the products or services proposed by the establishment.

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Today like never before we feel the urge to find alternative solutions to keep tourism in Europe alive, since it has suffered a stop because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Digital Tourism project can be the turning point for pulling out of the impasse, by creating new travel experiences. The last project meeting was held in Italy at the “F. Scarpellini” school in February 2020. Since then, due to the pandemic outbreak we could not organise face-to-face conferences, but we carry on with the possible activities.

At the beginning of May 2020 the Eurostat European Commission discussed on the future of tourism and the coronavirus impact on the sector. During the last months many museums, galleries, and other organisations created alternative tours to promote cultural heritage through the use of digital technologies.
The European Commission also launched an Open Public Consultation on the digital access to European cultural heritage for the revision of the 2011 Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural elements and digital preservation, receiving 565 contributions. In addition, the EC created a website called Re-open Europe to help find information about travel rules and restrictions in the current situation.

During the World Tourism Day 2020 (organised by UN’s World Tourism Organisation UNWTO), many events took place all over the world and a large audience took part thanks to the interactive maps created. Moreover, Europeana Foundation triggered the use of digital technologies and launched two websites aimed at supporting the tourism industry: “Discovering Europe Professional” and “Discovering Europe”.

What will be the future for tourism in Europe? The uncertain situation does not help us to find the right answer, but digitalisation can be a crucial breakthrough.

Taking into account the widespread concern in the resumption of economic and social activities, Turismo of Portugal (TP) created the “Clean and Safe” Seal (CSS) to distinguish tourist activities that ensure compliance with hygiene and cleaning requirements for the prevention and control of the virus COVID-19, as well as other possible infections.

With this seal, TP intends to provide companies with the information on the necessary hygiene and cleaning measures, in accordance with the recommendations of
the Health Authorities, as well as promoting Portugal as a safe destination. At the same time, it encourages the recovery of the sector at national and international level, reinforcing confidence in the destination of Portugal and its tourist resources.

CSS is free and optional. This certification is valid for one year and will require the implementation of an internal protocol that will ensure the necessary hygiene to avoid risks of contagion and guarantee safe procedures for the operation of tourist activities. TP offers the necessary training to implement the rules associated with the seal. Companies can and should use the seal in their physical and digital communication!

At the moment there are already stamps assigned to the following activities: Tourism Hotels and Apartments; Travel and Tourism Agencies; Tourism Animation Companies; Local Accommodation; Restaurants; Casinos; Rent-a-Car; Motorhome Rentals; Service Areas for Motorhomes; Golf Courses; Tourism Offices; Cultural Equipment; Sports and Shows Halls; Event and Congress Companies; Airports; Live Science Centers; Geoparks; Spas.

The digital platform "Clean & Safe", available in Portuguese and English, gathers information related to establishments that adhere to the "Clean & Safe" seal.

In addition to the complete list of participating establishments with information such as the location and the requirements they must comply with, the platform allows customers and tourists to assess the degree of satisfaction regarding the performance of the participating companies regarding compliance with the seal requirements, as it is up to everyone to contribute to tourism with safer services. It thus monitors the confidence index generated in tourists, who can make a direct assessment of the experience according to the measures implemented, communicating it instantly to the TP – digitalisation put into practice!

Customer assessment is one of the indicators to be used by TP to carry out random surveys of participating companies and services, together with the competent authorities and associations representing the activities covered.

It should also be noted that Portugal was the first country in Europe to obtain the “Safe Travels” seal, recognising the fulfilment of safety requirements for all. The companies that adhere to the Clean & Safe seal are also recognised as Safe Travels companies.
Insignare - Portugal - Coordinator of the project and owner of Fatima Hospitality School

ITE F. Scarpellini - Italy - Vocational Technical School

CDEA - Spain - VET Higher Education College

ACISO - Portugal - Business Association

EfVET - Belgium - Belgium European Umbrella Organisation

EGINA - Italy - Agency connected to schools and companies

Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work - The Netherlands - Social innovator on entrepreneurship, work and education, ‘work based learning’ expert

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