

**Using Mobile eTourism
for World Heritage Sites
to Enhance
Community Economies**

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Core Questions for Sustainable Economies... The Economic Value of Information

(1) How can **mobile phones and tablets be used for effective communications** about tourism in WHSs and other local tourist areas

(2) (using these technologies...) How can the **communities in the tourist areas have their voices heard** in terms of what they can offer to WHS tourism economies,

(3) What **impact** can this have on **sustainable poverty alleviation**?

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These questions have been structured as a part of a long-term research study which is designed to inform our development practices. This applies to all heritage sites as well as institutions, such as museums, libraries and archives, as well as places of the oral history. The participation we are considering under 2 are not only the traditional inclusion of communities in arts & crafts and as tour guides, but total participation in the heritage sites and institutions, as well as inclusion into the economies surrounding the heritage site in terms of a number of supportive economic activities (mechanics, hairdressers, house visits, restaurants, dancers and choirs, ...)

The “Information Society”

World Summit on the Information Society 2003/5

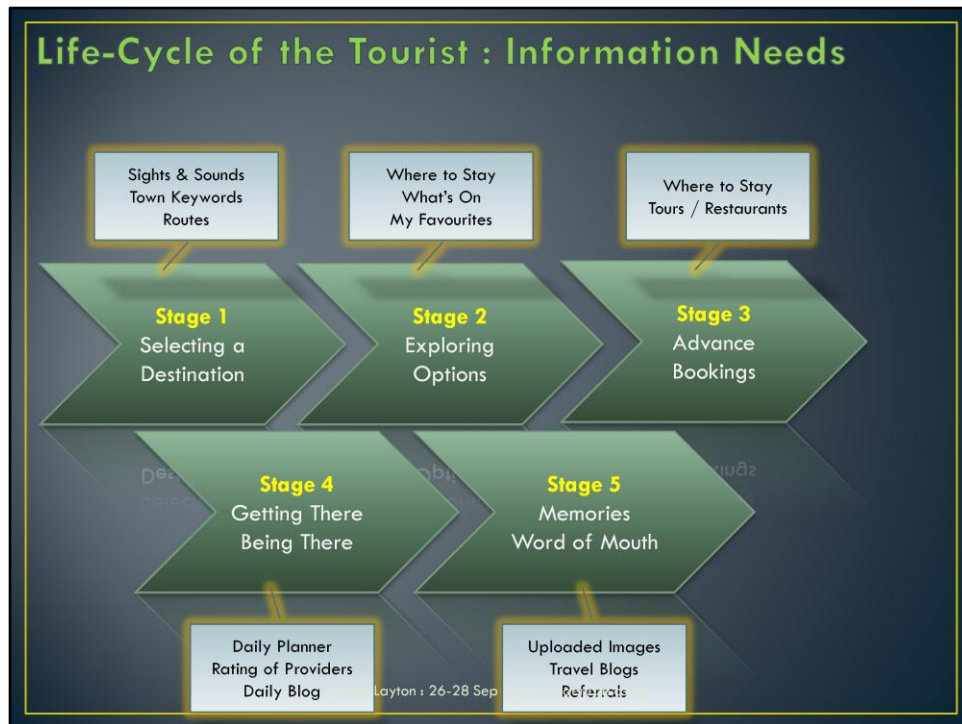
“to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life...”

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The WSIS is a key input into our work. We have used this as a core input into our research and development to help to guide us.



This work is ongoing in terms of identify what information is needed by which stakeholders and at which time. Our goals in the development of XtownX has been to ensure that all of this information is available to the right stakeholders, using the medium of the mobile phones.



As an extension of the previous slide, we have structured the information required for the tourist from the perspective of the tourist, and within the context of our lifecycle model for the tourist.

eTourism for WHSs

**The better informed the tourist..
...the better their decisions on where to visit
...the better their experience**

Challenges in getting access to good quality information...

Most WHS web sites are limited in what information they provide. **NONE have Web sites designed for Mobile.**

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This is our driving element within the development of the XtownX model – to better inform the tourist. We also note that most of the WHS do not have good web sites, and that none of these have a mobile-friendly support. This is a problem for tourists who want to find information as they are travelling, and the XtownX Initiative is designed to complement the other web sites by restructuring content for the mobile devices.



Our work goes well beyond the structuring of information over the XtownX mobile portal, but also into a range of other heritage information services – effectively the digital heritage. This included collections management systems for inventorising the heritage in museums, libraries, archives, the oral history and sites, and making these available through Mini Web Pages (I am presenting a paper on this at the SAMA Conference 2012 in Paarl).

Shifts in Technology

Shift...

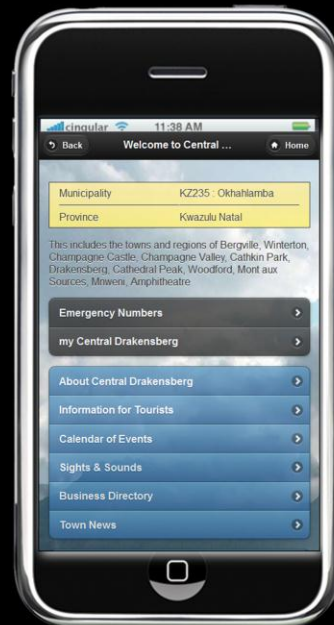
...from laptops/desktops/the Web

...to mobile phones/tablets/Mobile Web

Tourists always travel with mobile phones, and not so much with laptops (unless they are like me!)

Lack of Internet Cafes in most tourist areas

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This is a typical home page of a town in XtownX, in which all information is structured into the local context of a “town” and its surrounding areas. For this purpose a town can be a World Heritage Site, such as the Cradle of Humankind, which is not merely the places of the sites themselves, but the entire development and tourist economy around these.

Challenge of Inclusivity

- Challenges of including communities into the local economies around WHSs
- Digital inclusivity
 - Access : equipment and broadband
 - Content : useful content
 - Capacity : ability to use technology
- World Summit on the Information Society (2003/5)

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The problem I present is that of inclusivity, how to provide support for those “at the bottom of the pyramid” to access the Internet more effectively. This work is divided into ACCESS, CONTENT and CAPACITY.

Economics and Information

- Emerging Technology Trends
 - Information Society
 - Access to Broadband
 - Access to Mobile Web-Ready Devices
 - Reducing Cost of Information Access
- Emerging Social and Economic Trends
 - Digital divide
 - Limited Access to Markets by SMMEs
 - Cost of Establishing Businesses
 - Challenge of Getting Customers

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The social trends are the most serious in terms of the widening digital divide. We content that the mobile revolution provides one route into universal access which will help to reduce this divided if this is managed properly. Our role in this is to enhance the CONTENT available to the communities as well as to increase their CAPACITY to use this. Larger telecomms companies such as Telkom, Neotel, Vodacom, MTN and Cell C should focus on creating the ACCESS to these technologies on conjunction with the Dept of Communication and USAASA.

Promoting Community Businesses in World Heritage Sites

- Give them MINI WEB PAGES (for MOBILE)
 - Their FIRST entry into the Information Society
- Make them SEARCHABLE – locally
- Make them ACCESSIBLE
- Two examples given from the uKhahlamba World Heritage Site / Central Drakensberg
 - uMphafa Drakensberg Guides
 - xtownx.co.za/umphafa
 - Obhaskidi Basket Weavers
 - xtownx.co.za/obhaskidi

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Our initial attack on reducing the digital divide and bringing local communities into the tourism economy is to make them VISIBLE, but providing them with small web pages designed for mobile, called Mini Web Pages. We have developed a simple approach for this, and we hire local tourism graduates in each town in order to develop these pages.

Our goal is to make these pages searchable through the XtownX portal on which they reside, and also through the more conventional global search engines such as Google.

Umphafa Drakensberg Tours...

Central Drakensberg

Umphafa Drakensberg Tours

*guided hikes in the Drakensberg
by registered KZN Tourism tour guides*



Contact Us

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 Cedric Hongwane: [082 216 9974](tel:0822169974)
 Bheki Hadebe: [072 680 4343](tel:0726804343)
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 Web: www.berghiking.co.za

We can be found at the [Monks Cowl Nature Reserve](#) at the end of the R600 road.



Our Trails

Our trails include marvellous views, streams, waterfalls, and (best of all) indigenous forests, birds, and flowers.

Our prices are based upon the number of people and days, and range from R100 to R500 per person per day/night. All our tours are based upon a minimum of four people, and discounts maybe arranged for families and groups on request.



- Hike to the summit
- Zulu dancing
- Drakensberg fauna and flora
- Caves
- Wilderness ethics
- San rock art
- Medicinal plants
- Cultural sites
- Battlefields
- Voortrekker saw pits

Guided Day Walks


We offer guided days walks on many of the local trails from 7-22km, lasting from 2-10 hours, for a variety of fitness types, although some of the trails do require a level of fitness due to their strenuous nature.



Trail Name	Fitness	km	hrs
Hlathikhulu Trail	strenuous	16	8.5
Wonder Valley Trail	strenuous	20	10
Sunset Trail	strenuous	14	8.5
Makhurumani Trail	moderate	15	7.5
Injasuthi Trail	strenuous	20	8
Mhlwazeni Trail	strenuous	22	9
Sterkfontein 2973m	strenuous	13	9
Heritage Walk	moderate	7	2

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The first example is a group of tour guides in Drakensberg, who offer a range of walking tours up the mountains and to heritage sites, including rock art sites. They are registered with AMAFA and KZN Wildlife.

Obhaskidi Basket Weavers...

Central Drakensberg

Obhaskidi Basket Weavers

We make the baskets. Please come to visit us when you are visiting the Champagne Castle area of the Berg. We would love to meet you.

Introducing Obhaskidi

Introducing Obhaskidi




We are basket weavers making our baskets using local grasses and selling them outside the Champagne Castle hotel in the Central Drakensberg.

The word 'Obhaskidi' is a word from the isiZulu language, meaning baskets. This is what we do, and this is who we are.

We take care in making our baskets and each one is hand-crafted with a unique design that we create using our experience and ideas. Some of these baskets take us 7 days to make and are all built to a high quality, ensuring that they serve their purpose and last for a long time.

These baskets will add an authentic African feel to your environment, something personal and made especially for you - things that are not mass produced.

We have an exciting range of products for your home, guest house, hotel or business office.

Who we are and where to find us

We are a small group of local women who have developed skills in basketry. We have learned our skills from our mothers, who learned from their mothers, and so on. Every generation of our women learn more and we extend our craft with new methods, skills and designs.

The money that we make from selling our baskets is used to help our children become more educated. We want our children to get the education that we did not receive. We were children. Education is very important for people to survive in this new world.

We are very easy to find. Drive on the R60 towards the Monks Cowl Forest Station. At the entrance to the Champagne Castle hotel you will find us on the left hand side in a little shop. We make the baskets while we wait for you to arrive and you can watch us working (for a small additional fee).

How we make the baskets

Good quality, hand-made baskets take a long time to make. We collect the special grasses that we need from high in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains. We dry grasses and then prepare them for the baskets. We create the design as we work, and bind the grasses with wire and plastic strips to help keep the design intact.

Made in Drakensberg

We take great pride that we make these baskets, mats and hats using local materials. That everything is made here. These baskets do not come from China or any other place. These are made locally, locally in the Drakensberg, and all of the income is used for ourselves and kept within the local area. We are proud to be contributing to the local economy in our small way and hope that you take the time to meet us and to buy our goods.

Types of Baskets

We make baskets and other grass-based products for all a range of practical needs or also for artistic and aesthetic value to your home or business. These include the following types of baskets:

- laundry baskets
- hull baskets
- picnic baskets
- dog kennels
- phone mats
- entrance mats
- pot plant holders
- hats

The second example is a group of ladies who make baskets on the side of the road, and much of our work is engaged in “Turning Nobodies into Somebodies” by providing them with a marketing tool and branding. Many small businesses are such “nobodies” since they do not have names and little business structure. This model allows them to develop their business using modern technology, even though they themselves have never used this technology.

Part of our work involved educating them in terms of how to use the mobile phones more effectively.

Centricity of Information

- High-quality information
- To support sustainable tourism environment
 - Economic sustainability within communities / SMMEs
 - Increase economic opportunities for communities
 - Creating sustainable businesses
- Needs of (all) stakeholders
- Daily information needs of the tourist

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Our focus is on the central role of information in reduction of poverty, through building sustainable businesses and promoting these through information and communication.

XtownX: The Local Network

- An African Solution for African Conditions
- Focus on locality of information
- vs the Global Network (Google, Bing, Yahoo, ...)
- vs the Social Network (Facebook, Google+, ...)

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Our work is a local solution and is not inherited from the USA, UK, China or Japan.

The problem with using major search engines and social networks is that the advertising revenue is money which leaves the country, and we want a model in which the money paid for promotions remains not only in the country, but also largely within the local communities. We use the advertising revenue from XtownX to support the creation of new jobs, under the “decent work” definitions of the ILO.

Rather than being a global network or a social network, XtownX is THE LOCAL NETWORK.

Where to next?

- **Management Authorities**
 - eTourism plans for WHSs should include mobile as a **PREDOMINANT** form of communications
- **What we are doing (xtownx.co.za)**
 - Support for tourist **DURING THEIR TRIPS**
 - Capture **EVERY** business in the **COMMUNITY**
 - Given them each their own **MINI WEB PAGE**
 - Make them **VISIBLE** and **DISCOVERABLE**
 - **PROMOTE** the site to all tourists as they enter the sites
 - This is just the start of the mobile revolution for eTourism

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We would very much like to work with all management authorities, provincial and local government, in how this new and exciting technology can be used to rapidly improve the economy of the heritage sites and institutions, while also promoting the long-term recording and presentation of the heritage for future generations.

Contact Us

We would greatly appreciate your making contact with me and my team to see how we can implement XtownX in your tourist site, World Heritage Site, museum, province, town, or community.

Our focus is on both digital heritage in terms of creation of digital tools including databases, digital repositories, and digital preservation of heritage, as well as in using technologies for the promotion of heritage and local businesses.

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