



Winter Island Bornholm – Creating a Smart Travel Destination

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Type of best practice

Smart Tourism - Smart Destinations

Keywords

smart destination, cooperation, digitalisation

Destination Bornholm's Winter Island Project has helped develop Bornholm into an attractive, digitally smart travel destination. The project has achieved remarkable success with a 144% increase in Danish overnight stays during the winter of 2021-2022. The project has helped support and grow local businesses and the local community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing the est. revenue from 47 Mio. DKK to 72 Mio. DKK.

Organisation in charge of best practice

ECTN

Location

Destination Bornholm ApS

Dates

August 2021 - September 2022

Description

Bornholm is known as the "Sunshine Island" Historically, the Danish Island of Bornholm has always been known as a summer destination. For this reason, Bornholm has been nicknamed "The Sunny Island". Destination Bornholm ApS has been working with local partners in the tourism industry, municipality, and other public and private entities to build a sustainable tourism destination since 1992. Through the years, both the Spring and Autumn months have seen a steady increase in visitors and helped prolong the season, benefiting the island through economic and social stability and growth.

Turning a summer destination into a Winter Island In 2019 Destination Bornholm started a new project in cooperation with several local partners Danish Board of Business Development with the lofty goal of turning our island into a winter travel destination. The goal was to expand the tourism season into the winter months, thus creating opportunities to increase revenue for local businesses, create more full-time employment within the tourism industry and offer the island community a wider range of activities during the



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winter. We also realized that Bornholm is a very different destination compared to the summer months during the winter period. During the summer, every store, attraction, and shop is open and can cater to our guests, but most businesses hibernate until spring during winter. The closed businesses also limit the opportunities for the local inhabitants to experience their own island.

Open for business

However, several businesses are open during the winter season, and the project partners agreed to keep their doors open during winter. So even though there might be several closed doors, plenty of shops, eateries, attractions, and accommodations were now open. Enough to create a unique travel experience to Bornholm for any tourist during the winter period. For the benefit of the tourists AND the locals To help tourists find open local businesses (and promote those who were open), Destination Bornholm initiated a digital development project, partly funded by Danish Board of Business Development. The aim was to upgrade our local destination travel guide app, 'Bornholm', so the visiting tourist were given a tool that helped them navigate Winter Island Bornholm. As a side effect the locals started using the app to find open restaurants, shops, events.

During 2019-2020 Destination Bornholm launched a three-stage digital development project to facilitate a smarter and more accessible travel destination.

The development stages were:

- Event Engine: Creating a unique overview of events on the island by creating an "Event Engine" that could automatically fetch event data from local partners and display them in Destination Bornholm's app and on the website www.bornholm.info. This helped promote events during the winter period and optimized the time used for the event creators since they only had to create their event once (in their own system). Several local attractions implemented this Event Engine – incl. Bornholm's Museum and Bornholm's Art Museum.
- Usability upgrade: Destination Bornholm has allowed our partners to update their information directly on the destination website and official travel guide app in a unique cooperation between a local destination agency and local businesses. The partners have a login and can edit their opening hours, images, contact information and create events directly in Destination Bornholms database. This procedure was initially developed in 2017 but optimized through a usability upgrade during this project. The upgrade makes it easier for businesses, locals, and event creators to access the system and promote their offers.
- Inspiration in the official app: To guide tourists to great travel experiences, the official travel guide app 'Bornholm' was upgraded to include inspiration articles that could highlight experiences available during their stay on the island. Through this new system Destination Bornholm can now display selected articles from the app in both Danish, German and English – such as "Sjove vinteraktiviteter for familier med små børn" (Danish for "Fun winter activities for families with small children").



Links

<https://bornholm.info/> <https://bornholm.info/erhverv>

Resources needed

Based on the digital development in this project, Destination Bornholm has started additional digital development in co-operation with the local municipality. Building on the Event Engine and easy usability of the system, it has been decided to develop the online event calendar further to include tourist-related events and events by clubs, societies, congregations, etc. Thus, creating the basis for a digital overview of all events and activities on the island of Bornholm.

Challenges encountered

Increased online interest The digital development supported Destination Bornholm's digital channels throughout the pandemic and helped the Danes find an opportunity to experience our beautiful Baltic Island. Unfortunately, we lack the precise data from our app due to technical issues at the time of this application, but the digital development affects both our website and app. We experienced a 31% increase in traffic in 2020 compared to 2019 (pre-pandemic) on the website. In 2021 (when all digital stages were implemented) we experienced a 24% increase in traffic during the winter period. Based on the digital development in this project, Destination Bornholm has started additional digital development in co-operation with the local municipality. Building on the Event Engine and



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easy usability of the system, it has been decided to develop the online event calendar further to include tourist-related events and events by clubs, societies, congregations, etc. Thus, creating the basis for a digital overview of all events and activities on the island of Bornholm.

Evidence of success

The project launched in 2019, and, unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the travel industry hard. An unforeseen development in the project affected the key performance indicators. However, during 2019 and 2020, Destination Bornholm implemented the digital development described in the previous sections and continued to lobby local businesses and partners to stay open during the winter. As part of the 'Event Engine' digital development the following partners were automatically integrated into Bornholm's official travel guides in the app 'Bornholm' and on the website www.bornholm.info: Bornholm's Museum (incl. all subdepartments) Svanekegården Grønbechs Gård Bornholm's Teater Gaarden – Bornholm's Food Culture House NaturBornholm Bornholm's Art Tour Bornholm's Culture Week It is estimated that these partners and others have contributed with several hundred new events through the Event Engine and thanks to the usability upgrade. Dialogue with the newly established 'Bornholm's Christmas Market' also helped create a strong reason-to-go. The pandemic hit Europe hard in 2020 and 2021 and, closed borders and quarantine laws prevented international travel to Bornholm. Especially the number of international tourists to Bornholm. In the winter months of 2020, Bornholm lost over 90% of its international accommodation bookings compared to the previous year. More open local businesses Luckily, Bornholm managed to attract Danes during the summer and Autumn to offset the lack of German, Swedish, Polish, and other international tourists. The island's popularity helped Destination Bornholm and our partners persuade local businesses to keep their doors open during the winter. At the project's start, there were 208 registered open businesses on the island during winter, but in 2021 that number had increased to 375. Destination Bornholm could present tourists and locals with the best overview of everything Winter Island Bornholm had to offer through digital platforms. More Guests and more revenues As the travel restrictions were still in effect during the winter of 2020 and (to some degree) 2021, Bornholm became a popular winter destination for Danes. In 2020 Bornholm experienced a 29% increase in Danish overnight stays. In the winter of 2021, this number increased by 144% and helped Bornholm's tourism industry through the pandemic. We estimate that during the winter months of 2020 and 2021, Bornholm's tourism revenue increased from an estimated 47 Mio. DKK to almost 72 Mio. DKK – a 53% increase in times of a pandemic. We believe this success was achieved based on this project's goals of developing an innovative digital travel destination that helped facilitate co-operation between local businesses, the local community, and tourists.

Potential for transfer

This particular application has the ability to adapt.

Further Information

This project won the ECTN 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism' Award 1st prize in 2022, in the framework of ReInHerit Horizon 2020 CSA, jointly with Europa Nostra and European Travel Commission.





Dublin Discovery Trails App

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Type of best practice

Innovation (including 3D, AI, Big data, Metaverse, etc)

Keywords

Digitalisation, Smart Tourism, Dublin, Docklands

Dublin City Council (DCC) launched Dublin Discovery Trails – ‘Doors into Docklands’, the first in a series of mobile application (App) based immersive discovery trails with innovative Augmented Reality (AR). The App which has been funded by Fáilte Ireland under their Destination Towns Initiative is to provide an enhanced visitor experience in the Docklands area. Dublin Discovery Trails, ‘Doors into Docklands’ developed by Peel X in partnership with DCC and Fáilte Ireland, is an innovative way to see the history of the Docklands come to life through Augmented Reality which combines the real-world history with smart technology.

Organisation in charge of best practice

Dublin City Council

Location

Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Dates

2022-2023

Description

The Aim: In 2019 Dublin City decided to invest in a new and unique story telling App for the city. The aim was to use technology to bring Dublin's old stories to life in a new way. The core idea was to help drive visitors to less frequented areas of the city and encourage the development of new experiences thought out Dublin.

The Idea: During Covid 19 we noticed that many people became accustomed and used to exploring and researching destinations via their smart phone. We decided to use this emerging trend as an opportunity to help visitors explore the city in a new and digital way. We knew that Dublin was full of stories, history, heritage and culture and that we needed to come up with a way to unlock that information and put it into the hands of visitors. Ultimately the core idea of the App was to help direct visitors, both local, domestic and



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international to lesser visited parts of Dublin city in a way that was exemplary of the cutting edge of digital experience development.

The concept: At the time (2019) mobile apps were not very popular or available for the purposes of story telling. We decided to explore the area of Digital Tour guiding and Digital Trails more. To do this we consulted with many other destinations which had already developed such Apps, such as Linz, London and Derry. However many of these applications did not go as far as we wanted in creating an outstanding digital experience. We knew that we needed something more advanced. Having decided on core requirements we decided to consult the market for our solution in 2020.

Creating efficiencies and scale through a framework approach: Having spoken to colleagues in other destinations we knew that one of the core challenges for these kinds of projects was in creating efficiencies and scale. We knew that many destinations were developing many Apps at the same time and that the market was getting crowded and confusing from the perspective of the visitor. That is why we did something very unique in terms of procurement of this digital service. In order to stop the development of many similar apps with small budgets spread out amongst many diverse stakeholders we decided to create a centralised heritage trail platform for Dublin. This meant that we would procure these services together as a group of clients rather than separate entities. This would mean that we could centralise our resources and content onto one app and focus our budget and promotion directly in one place. This multi-client approach to digital heritage product development is something that was very unique to Dublin at the time. This meant that we could now build one platform that would tell the story of Dublin's unique heritage and history and the platform would be shared between the major city partners of Dublin.

The Market Solution: In 2020 we put out a PIN or Prior Indicative Notice to consult the market on Digital Heritage Trails solutions. Having received many submissions from developers we decided to proceed with an EU tender to acquire the service directly. In 2021 we published the EU Tender for Digital Heritage Trail App design services at a total contract value of €500,000. At the time this was the largest of its kind Digital Heritage Trail app project.

Doors Into Docklands Trail Development.

In 2021 we appointed the developer Peel X to develop our new Digital Trails Platform called Dublin Discovery Trails. Along with Peel and a dedicated project development team we began work on the first trail which would be Doors into Docklands a new immersive trail which would tell the unique history and heritage of Dublin's Docklands through immersive technology and Augmented Reality. The working group was made up of representatives from across the city as well as historians and city managers.

Content Development: In Dublin we know that we have an incredible rich history. In order to bring that history to life we needed excellent content for the Doors Into Docklands Trail. We decided to use a first of its kind AR Portal development which would allow the user to experience the past as a 360 degree portal. We identified four heritage hero points which would be appropriate for this new AR technology. These included, the recreation of the





Crimean Banquet in the CHQ building. The animation of the famine memorial statues on the quay. The recreation of heritage Guinness barges sailing up the Liffey river and the famous burning of the Custom House in 1921. Much of this content and archival material was crowd sourced from historians, museums, partners, attractions and local historians and community groups within the area itself.

Testing and Launch: As we neared the launch of the App we tested it amongst several diverse stakeholder groups in the city including internally with city stakeholders and externally with local history groups and citizens. Finally, after much successful testing we launched the app on the 11th of January 2023 in the CHQ Building in Dublin City Centre. Since its launch the App has been very successful with over 4k downloads with an average user time of 30 minutes. This means that there is now more visitors exploring more diverse and under visited areas of the city than ever before. The launch of the app has also been a huge success in terms of the network it has created. Since the launch of the Doors into Docklands Trail there has been three additional trails in other parts of Dublin added to the App with two more planned for late 2023. For us in Dublin this demonstrates a great example of how a city can come together to create best in class immersive digital heritage experiences.

Review and Learnings: During the development of Dublin Discovery Trails we launched the first ever Digital Trails Toolkit (attached), so that others could learn from our experience.





Links

<https://doorsintodocklands.com/>

<https://www.bu.edu/bhr/2021/10/04/digital-trail-development-opportunities-for-tourism-and-hospitality-lessons-from-ireland/>

Resources needed

n/a

Challenges encountered

n/a

Evidence of success

Since the launch of the App in January 2021 the App has had 4500 downloads. The average dwell time for each user has been 30 minutes. This means that there has been an additionality of over 2100 hours of users spent in the location of the Dublin Docklands. In terms of the original aims of the development of the app we feel that these metrics have matched our expectations.

Potential for transfer

During the development of Dublin Discovery Trails we launched the first ever Digital Trails Toolkit (attached), so that others could learn from our experience.

Further Information

<https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Dublin/dublin-trails-toolkitupdated-2022.pdf> <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-41045846.html>