

Chapter 61

HeritageGO!

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Abstract

Heritage Trail has been established as an icon for history of the destination and the purpose of conserving the destination's heritage values. In line with the notion above, Malaysia is also taking this step to join the bandwagon of Heritage Trail. Hence, this initiate innovation for HeritageGO!, a mobile application that utilize Augmented Reality (AR) technology that guides user by virtually augmenting directions on roads through the smartphone camera. Furthermore, this app also helps to enhance tourist's quality experience while visiting and touring the Malaysian Heritage Walk. In addition, this innovation project could bring echoed benefits towards nearby business entities through enhancing their visibility through business advertisement while engaging users with new interactive and immersive content. In conjunction with government initiatives towards sustainable tourism development, this app is hope to transform and revolutionize the way heritage trails are being experienced, from passive to active participation and from static interpretative display to fun immersive experience in response to the industrial digital revolution 4.0.

Introduction

According to the Guidelines on Designing Heritage Trails, National Heritage Board Singapore (2004), heritage trail is a chosen journey that brings the trail explorer to learn more about a country history, culture, architecture, flora and fauna through visiting historical sites and buildings. In venturing through this journey, heritage trail serves as a platform of storytelling of past life, history and culture of a destination towards current individuals be it domestic or international travelers. Heritage trails around the world are mainly focusing in preservation and conservation of culture and history of the past. Around the world in most major countries, heritage trails are bound to exist for travellers to experience. In noting the mission of heritage trail development around the world, Malaysia also joins the bandwagon of having their own in its major states and cities such as Perak, Penang, Melaka, Johor, Sabah, and Kuala Lumpur. In fact, based on all the major states mentioned, they are considered as Malaysia's top 13 walking tours and heritage trails for active explorers (Fernandez, 2017) and among the most famous trail would be Kuala Lumpur heritage walk which consist of four different walking tours including a night walk. One of the prominent trail even takes tourists to eleven (11) historical sites located within the vicinity of Dataran Merdeka. These heritage trails can be experience through self exploration with a map without a tour guide or even through a free walking tour group with a tour guide.

Problem Statement

There are 13 Top Heritage Trails mainly in Kuala Lumpur, Perak, Penang, Johor, Melaka and Sabah. However, there are some critics on Heritage Walk especially in Kuala Lumpur due to a lack of proper pathways, direction and signage visibility. Thus, it gives negative impact which resulting tourist's frustration and reducing quality experience during the tour. Besides having to take the free walking tour, one explores the trail through the aids of maps, guidebooks, designated pathways and visual signage along the trail. If lack of attention were given towards these aiding facilities can lead to disruption of travelers' experience of the

heritage trail.

Frustration, anger and feeling lost might even make the travelers quit the trail halfway. Thus, in reality, Kuala Lumpur Heritage Walk is also exposed towards these experience disruptions. Currently, the heritage walk has received some criticism regarding their lack of visual direction, proper pathways and signage visibility. One can easily get lost along the trail and quit halfway through the journey. If this continues to happen, the intention designated storytelling journey that needed to convey to the explorer is incomplete. Furthermore, it was reported in *TheStar* newspaper, that a number of experts are disappointed to learn that efforts to create heritage trails in the older part of Kuala Lumpur appear to be more of a streetscape project, instead of an attempt to revive the historical sites' forgotten beauty (Teng, 2012). Hence, this initiates innovation for HeritageGO!

Product Objective

Currently, tourism in Malaysia does not extensively use the application of augmented reality compared to other developed countries like America, Berlin, China and etc. Therefore, HeritageGO! can kick start Malaysian tourism towards the 4th industrialization of the digital era. This project aims to create and develop a mobile application that uses augmented reality and guides users by virtually augmenting directions on roads that the user sees through his camera. HeritageGO! will be an extended service for Heritage Walk in a form of interpretive journey. Users will be aided if lost through physical signage and guided back to the designated trail without intertwining with other trails.

Furthermore, this app also helps to enhance tourists' quality experience while visiting and touring the Malaysian Heritage Walk. The app will also be equipped with interpretive reality which users can direct their camera phone towards the historical buildings or architecture and experience an augmented visual interpretation in a form of a video or visual imagery about the historical site. In a way, HeritageGO! is designed to make history storytelling from conventional to interactive. Fun learning from the tips of your finger of mobile convenience.

Product Novelty

Augmented Reality (AR) implementation is spreading like wildfire throughout major developed countries in parallel with the transition towards the 4th industrialization of the digital era. Thus, HeritageGO! is widely influenced from the integration functions of multiple augmented and interpretive reality from different countries and at the same time introducing it in Malaysia by being one of its first. Hence, it serves as a platform of integrating multiple features and functions into one application for the user's convenience instead of having to go through opening up many applications to find information.

Product's Benefits to Society

In addition, this innovation project could bring echoed benefits towards nearby business entities through enhancing their visibility. HeritageGO! is inserted with extra features of which it can tell you all the nearby restaurants, food stalls, accommodations, attractions and facilities along the heritage trail. As the user follows the virtually augmenting trails, he can see through his camera all the nearby business entities through notification bubbles that are along the trail. These features will be a delight especially for non-local travelers visiting foreign vicinities. Moreover, it can increase the tourist spending power that directly increases tourist receipts and local discretionary income.

Conclusion

According to Malaysian Urban Conservation Initiatives (2010), interpretative media (signs) in town centres are including signposts, display or information panels and plaques on buildings, supported by loose material such as maps, guidebooks and leaflets. Although these conventional media have aided us in physical situations, HeritageGO! is designed to reduce the use of these conventional media and move forward towards Going Green and eco-friendly. It gives people options for going digital savvy and being responsible travellers at the same time.

As a result, its importance is in line with the government initiatives towards sustainable tourism

development and at the same time educating nations towards Green society. Consequently, in the action of reducing printing of conventional media, official bodies can hopefully turn and divert financial resources towards the actual preservation, restoration and environment cleanliness of historical sites along the Kuala Lumpur Heritage Walk.

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